the weekly
Standard
OCTOBER 7, 1996
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BILL CLINTON'S BAY OF PIGS
MICHAEL A. LEDEEN

IGNOBLE NOBELMAN

The Strange Case of Carleton Gajdusek: A Great Scientist—and Accused Pedophile

A Special Report by Claudia Winkler

De-Moralizing the Ghetto
ALAN EHRENHALT

The President's Good Press
MICHAEL BARONE

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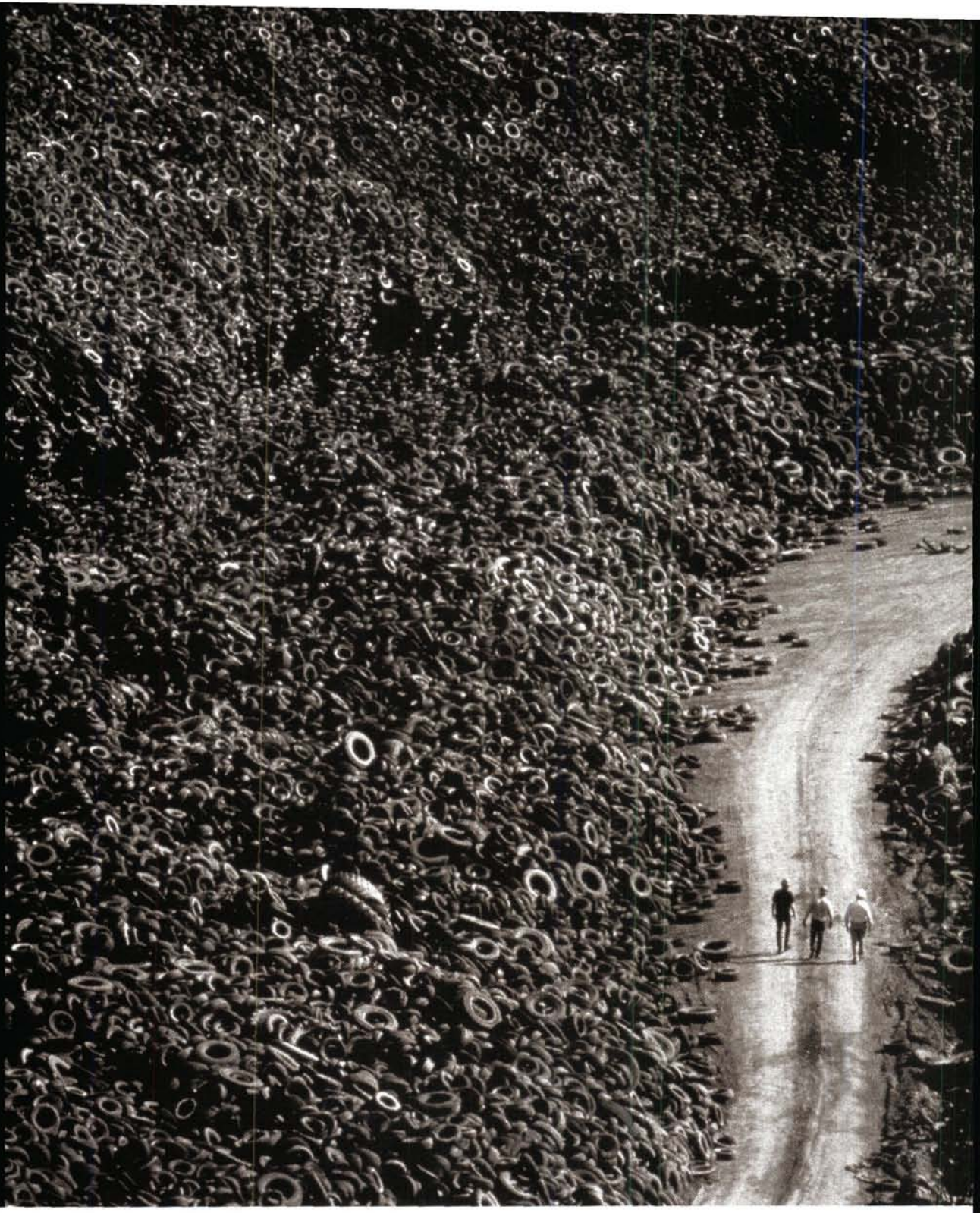

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Standard

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Heroes & Villains of the Partial-birth Battle

The Senate may have failed to override President Clinton's veto of the partial-birth-abortion ban last week, but the total and staggering inability of the pro-Clinton forces to make anything resembling a coherent argument was testimony to the fact that a) the procedure is indefensible and b) abortion backers feel, nonetheless, they have to fight for every form of abortion with absolutist fervor.

Here's an illustration of how badly they did: On September 24, Sen. Rick Santorum, a Pennsylvania Republican, posed a hypothetical question to Sen. Barbara Boxer, a California Democrat. What if, after delivering everything but the baby's head (at which point partial-birth "abortions" are performed), the doctor accidentally allowed the baby's head to slip out? Would the doctor and the mother, asked Santorum, still have the right to kill the fully delivered baby? In other words, does Barbara Boxer think infanticide should be legal?

It's hard to tell, because Boxer refused to answer Santorum's query. She began with a discussion of her support for *Roe* v. *Wade*—which says nothing about partial-birth abortion—and then wandered off into a discussion of how "this entire subject should be left to the privacy of families, to the religious convictions of our people." She talked on and on. But the one thing she never did was declare her opposition to killing a fully delivered baby. Congratulations, Mrs. Boxer: Maybe we're now beginning to see the logic of your position.

While we're on the subject, we would like to offer a tribute to the *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen, who wrote a remarkable column last week reversing himself on partial-birth abortion. Turns out, Cohen says, he really didn't do any research before opining in favor of the procedure; but once he did, he came to see it as indistinguishable from infanticide. Cohen's *mea culpa* was an impressive and large-spirited gesture and an example of genuine intellectual honesty. As were the two *Washington Post* articles the week before that helped change Cohen's mind, by reporters David Brown and Barbara Vobejda.

By the way, it would have been nice if the words "partial-birth abortion" had escaped Bob Dole's lips last week. It is, after all, an issue on which over 75 percent of Americans are on his side; one that is of particular importance to swing Catholic voters; and one that proves Dole's contention that Clinton is beholden to the extreme left of his party. But no, addressing this issue that actually does shed light on the moral bankruptcy of the Clinton administration would have taken the Dole campaign "off message." Unbelievable.

Turmoil on the Dole Plane

Taxes were the Dole message last week, and Bob Dole began with a speech about his tax plan, a speech he had carefully vetted in the days before he flew to Detroit to deliver it. The final draft was handed to him on the plane Monday morning, and Dole—who is very concerned that the numbers he uses in his speeches be sound and immune to cheap attack—immediately spotted a factoid in the speech he had never seen before. The factoid claimed that the new taxes Bill Clinton has been advocating would cost the treasury $188 billion. Previously, the Dole campaign had been saying that the tax hikes would total some $63 billion.

Dole was irritated, and nervous; he wanted to know who was responsible for fiddling with a text he had approved and changing numbers he had understood. Frantic phone calls from the plane to Dole HQ in Washington ensued; the author of the new factoid turned out to be James Cicconi, a James Baker protégé and Bush White House aide, who stuck it in at the last minute without telling anyone. Cicconi was using numbers from the Joint Economic Committee—numbers that did not take into account, as the Dole campaign previously had, Clinton's proposed targeted tax cuts, which reduce the size of his tax increase from $188 billion to $63 billion.

The fact that the plane went into a frenzy and that the speech reverted to the more scrupulously fair number stands in staggering contrast to the Clinton campaign, which is still throwing around fake numbers like

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Scrapbook

"100,000 new cops on the street" and "12 million people have used the Family and Medical Leave Act" even though they have been proved false time and again.

The Dwarf vs. the Hero

The pernicious dwarf has gone too far this time. "Now, here's a guy that's supposed to be a war hero," said Ross Perot of Bob Dole. "You'd think he'd be willing to stand up and talk to another person, wouldn't you? But he can't." A *supposed* war hero?

On April 14, 1945, the 85th Mountain Regiment, Third Battalion, advanced on Hill 913 in Italy's Po Valley. The 2nd Platoon of I Company, led by Lt. Bob Dole, came under a torrent of steel as Germans fired everything they had—machine guns, mortars, and grenades—to halt their advance. When his radio man was hit, Dole, then 21 years old, crawled out from the cover of a bomb crater to drag his fellow soldier to safety. But Dole's friend was dead. The Germans then fired on Dole and wounded him from behind. As Dole biographer Richard Ben Cramer describes it, steel fragments shattered his shoulder and collarbone and "smashed into his vertebrae, crushed a piece of his spine, it was broken, the spinal cord was knocked out. He couldn't move. He couldn't feel anything below his neck."

Exactly ten years later, in April 1955, Lt. Junior Grade Ross Perot began a failed effort to get out of the Navy after two years of service rather than the four required for Annapolis graduates. He hated the Navy and pestered his superiors for an early discharge. Perot's requests resulted in the following evaluations from his superiors: Rear Admiral J.C. Daniel, then head of destroyer forces in the Atlantic, wrote to the secretary of the Navy and the chief of naval personnel in July 1955 that this behavior "indicates that Perot is too immature to be entrusted with the leadership responsibilities inherent in sea duty." He advised that Perot be given a "purely administrative" assignment on land away from the Navy's ships. Also in July 1955, Perot's destroyer division commander, Captain G.H. Miller, sent an official letter to the chief of naval personnel advising that Perot was "emotionally maladjusted for a regular Navy career."

That emotional maladjustment continues to this day.

Leftie Op-ed of the Week

"Vote for Clinton *again*?" writes a disgusted Katha Pollitt in the October 7 issue of the *Nation*. "As Voltaire is said to have replied when the Marquis de Sade invited him to a second orgy, since he'd enjoyed the first one so much: 'No thanks. Once is philosophy, twice is perversion.'" Wow.

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Casual

THE RRT AND ME

I was a target of the Clinton campaign's rapid-response team. My offense was small. I asked James Carville, the president's loyal political strategist, a touchy question on CNN's *Crossfire*. Now you might think this would have gone under the radar of the rapid-response team (RRT for short), that the responders would have been too busy with Bob Dole's TV ads or Haley Barbour's barbs. But no. When President Clinton's name is sullied, by bigshots or peons, the RRT goes on red alert. It's a big job.

My question was innocent enough. The CNN show was about the character issue in the presidential campaign. I asked about a dubious Clinton statement. "Remember when church burnings were a problem, black churches around the South?" I said to Carville. "The president said he had vivid and painful memories of black churches being burned in Arkansas. Well, it turns out that never happened. What was he talking about?"

I might as well have been asking about Sri Lankan cuisine. "I'm not familiar with it," he said, "but I'm sure churches were burned at the time. I just don't know what you're talking about."

Sensing vulnerability, I persisted. Historians in Arkansas said he was "making it up," I asserted. Carville said he "didn't know about that." But I'd have to ask the president, and, anyway, why was I bothering with something that happened a long time ago in Arkansas? Soon the yip-yap drifted to another subject. That was it, I thought. Little did I know the RRT was mobilizing.

The next day, a fax (on "Clinton Gore 96" stationery) arrived at CNN from Diane Blair. You may not remember her, but she's an Arkansas pal of Hillary Clinton, a history professor at the University of Arkansas and, at the moment, the chair of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Her husband, Jim, is better known. He's the guy who did the cattle-futures deals for Hillary and turned her $1,000 into $100,000.

Diane Blair said I'd accused the president of lying about church bombings in Arkansas. True. "In fact," she went on, a church burned in Hot Springs when young Bill was 17 and "there is a strong possibility that it was a racially motivated arson." She sent along two newspaper clips. "I know you will want to make an on-air correction of your factual error."

No, I didn't immediately beg Ted Turner for time on CNN for a correction. I figured I'd better look into the subject first. Before I could, the RRT struck again, this time with a note from Carville. "I enjoyed the show," he said. "In light of the attached, don't you think a personal apology to the President is in order?" Attached were the same clips Blair had sent my way.

I didn't reach for the phone and dial 456-1414 (the White House's number). I turned to Nexis. What exactly had Clinton said? "In our country during the '50s and '60s, black churches were burned to intimidate civil rights workers," he declared in his weekly radio address on June 8. "I have vivid and painful memories of black churches being burned in my own state when I was a child."

The president's recollection caught the interest of the Little Rock newspaper, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. The next day, the paper wrote that nobody in Arkansas shared Clinton's memory, not the state historian, not the head of the state NAACP, not the former president of the Regular Arkansas Baptist Convention.

The White House quickly clarified Clinton's remark, saying he was talking about "some black community buildings" that were burned. That was followed by the White House's release of a list of three black churches that burned. Two of the fires, wrote the *Democrat-Gazette*, weren't arson, and no cause was determined for the other. So they didn't fit Clinton's description of racist retaliation.

I wasn't vindicated yet. A black minister in Hot Springs recalled that his church burned in 1963. Clinton was a high-school kid there at the time. Local authorities said there was no evidence of arson, and the special agent in charge of the FBI office in Little Rock decided an investigation wasn't warranted. However, blacks in Hot Springs believed the fire was set because the pastor, James Donald Rice, was trying to organize a chapter of the NAACP in town, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

That left the matter murky, like so many issues on which Clinton's truthfulness has been challenged. But not to the RRT. A letter appeared in the *Washington Times* citing the Hot Springs burning as proof Clinton's memory was "not faulty." It was written by an associate professor of history at the University of Arkansas, thus a colleague of Diane Blair. The letter was also one of the attachments the RRT sent me. The other was the *Democrat-Gazette* story mentioning the Hot Springs church.

Should I apologize? I think not. But I'd be delighted if the RRT explains why the president, at best, ballooned a small, unconfirmed item into a big-time political pronouncement.

FRED BARNES

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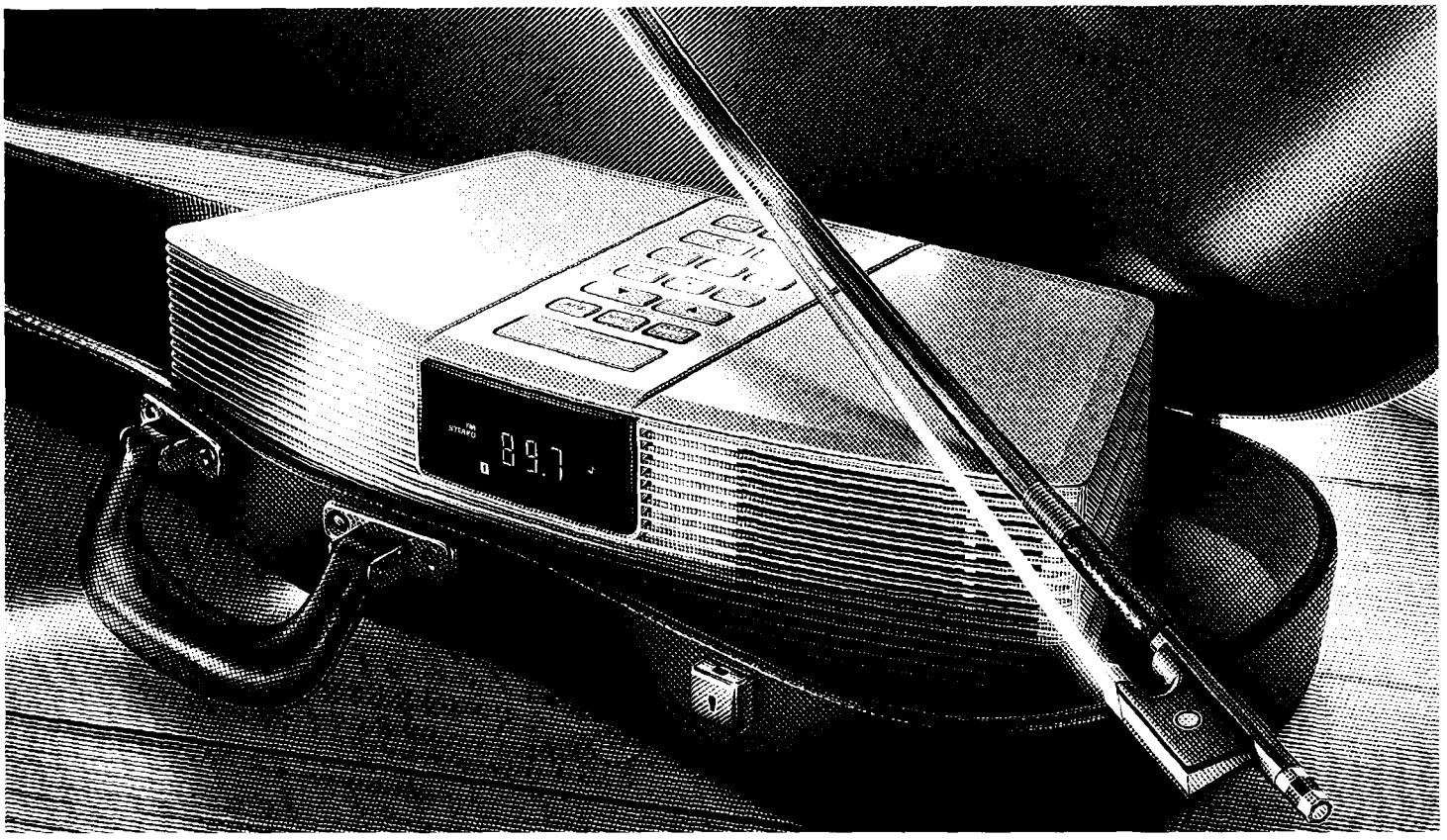

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Hard Times For Trial Lawyers

Carolyn Lochhead's article on trial lawyers was right on target ("The Growing Power of Trial Lawyers," Sept. 23). Lochhead mentioned briefly the one reform that stands a chance of putting some responsibility back into the civil-justice system: a loser-pays law.

The thought of a loser-pays law strikes fear into the trial lawyer's heart since it makes him responsible for the damage he inflicts on his innocent victims. Under the current system, if a plaintiff wins in court, the defendant is responsible for his own costs, the plaintiff's costs, and the damages. If the defendant wins, the plaintiff has no responsibility for the defendant's costs or the "pain and suffering" the defendant experienced.

The plaintiff can control his costs and has the option of dropping out if he feels that the costs will exceed the possible rewards. The defendant has no such option. Under a loser-pays law, the plaintiff would have to take into account a less predictable cost of the defendant's expenses and would have to think twice about naming someone as a defendant.

The loser-pays law will be effective only if the plaintiff attorney is also a responsible party, perhaps up to the percentage he would have received under a contingency-fee arrangement.

Only in America can someone say anything he wants about you in a legal document, force you to hire a lawyer to defend yourself, make you suffer anxiety about financial ruin, and then walk away from it all with no obligation to you for your costs and your pain and suffering. Trial lawyers believe all innocent victims deserve compensation, unless those victims are their own.

S.W. Bondurant
Grenada, MS

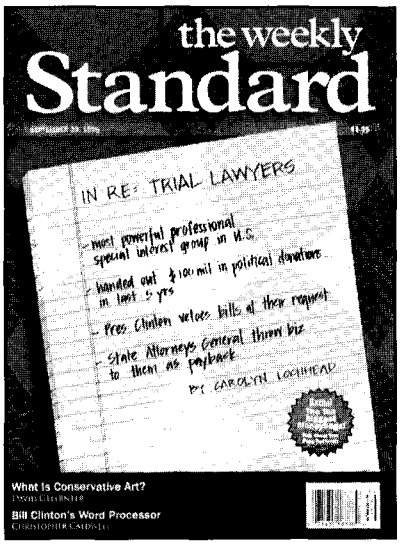
Abortion's Legal Side

Thank you for another excellent editorial regarding partial-birth abortions ("Abortion and the President," Sept. 23). But as in the April 29 editorial, you failed to explain the legal reasoning behind the baby's removal from the womb "feet first."

In order to protect himself legally, the obstetrician deliberately and inconveniently turns the baby around. If the baby proceeds head first and the physician terminates the baby's life with the head exposed, that is clearly murder in every jurisdiction of the United States. If, however, the baby's head is far enough up the birth canal and out of sight, it is a legal abortion.

According to law, the only difference between murder and legal abortion is the position of the victim.

Mark R. Voss
Cottage Grove, MN



Looking Forward to 2000

As a consultant who will soon earn his living by making software systems Year 2000-compliant, I was an interested reader of Lawrence J. Siskind's "The Year 2000 Crisis" (Sept. 23).

While the article correctly spelled out the possible apocalypse, Siskind only partially addressed why we find ourselves in this predicament. He overlooked two very important reasons.

First, in the early days of mainframe computers, long before the advent of memory chips, computer memory was constructed of wires strung through tiny iron "cores," called bits. Depending on the computer, a number of these constructs (usually eight or nine) would be assembled into a matrix such that there were enough bits to make a byte. One byte equals one character of data. This hard-wired memory was very expensive, and as a rule we had little available with which to run programs and process data. The permanent-storage media of the day (cards, tapes, disks, and drums) were bulky if not expensive and did not lend themselves to storing unnecessary data. The point is that, by design, we used memory sparingly. Unnecessary data were not stored, and the century portion of the year (the 19) was considered unnecessary. Siskind was right on the mark when he wrote that nobody dreamed that these systems would still be around and functioning at the turn of the century. So what happened? That is reason number two.

For the most part, the systems that have survived do not exist as they were originally designed. Instead, they have evolved to keep pace with changing business needs and, in the process, have become more functional. As these systems grew larger and more complex, the idea of undertaking a major project to correct the Year 2000 shortcoming was a tough sell to management, because management correctly believes that the old legacy systems should be replaced.

On a lighter note, I have been in the computer-software business for 29 years, and I am all too familiar with terms like "techie," "bit-chaser," "core-monger," and, of course, "geek." But I have never heard the term "techno-twit."

Jim Killoran
Shelton, WA

A Conservative Art Lesson

David Gelernter asks, "What is Conservative Art?" (Sept. 23). The answer is simple: If it's really art, it'll be attacked as being too conservative.

The art establishment likes to remind you that Dante put "the despisers of art" in hell. And he did: He put the blasphemers, the Sodomites, and the usurers in the same circle as the despisers of God, nature, and art. Dante was a student of St. Thomas Aquinas, who taught that "art" or artifice is the creation of useful objects, and usurers got rich without making anything.

The decorative arts are useful, St.

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Thomas taught, because "beauty" is the mind's perception of the goodness of Creation: Something that exists as God intended it to has a wholeness (as opposed to being damaged or incomplete), proper proportion, and clarity ("Bright colors are more beautiful," he wrote). The mind can perceive and rejoice in these qualities. Our joy in beauty, then, should lead us to thank the Creator.

Art can also be used to express the beauty of abstract ideals and to lead us to love virtue. The soul that has learned through art to love Creation should therefore have a wholesomeness, proper proportion, and clarity of its own. And our joy in Creation should move us to want to form a closer union, through prayer, with the Creator.

This is what "art" meant from the 13th century to the 18th century. And if we claim to believe that art ennobles without also believing that that which does not ennoble is not art, then we're sniffing what Ernest Renan called "the perfume of an empty vase."

DON SCHENK
ALLENTOWN, PA

FIT AS A FIDDLE, INDEED

Joseph Epstein is unfair to violinists when he accuses them of preferring indiscriminate eating to fitness ("The Romanian Air-Force Diet," Sept. 23).

Itzhak Perlman's legs were crippled by polio when he was young; he cannot work out on Epstein's Nordic Walk-Fit. Pinchas Zukerman is not chubby; just look at him. Isaac Stern has a much better chance of making age 75 than Epstein does.

NORMAN BRUST
NEW YORK, NY

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WEST

I read with great interest Victor Davis Hanson's piece "Ken Burns's West" (Sept. 23). A good deal of what Hanson says makes sense, but at least two of his points should not pass without response.

"Sheridan and Sherman, Custer too, exterminated far more whites in their bloody careers than they did Indians." They were willing to shoot "Virginians, Georgians, and Texans as well as Lakotas and Cherokees" when ordered to do so. But this passes over the difference between killing soldiers and murdering civilians. Even in the most brutal final stages of the Civil War, the strategies of Sheridan, Sherman, and Custer did not emphasize the systematic extermination of enemy civilians. (In fact, I have always been struck by how little of that sort of thing there was in the Civil War, comparatively speaking.) I'm sure Hanson appreciates the difference. I agree with him that the word "racism" is too simple by itself to account for this difference; but it is hard to believe that it is not a part of the explanation.

Also, it is true that a key dimension of the tragedy of, say, the Plains Indians "was that they occupied a vast expanse and were often a warlike people." But most of the California Indians were not exceptionally warlike, and they were slaughtered too.

I raise these matters to underscore Davis's point that the moral complexity of history shouldn't be smoothed over for the sake of easy lessons. A due appreciation for the remarkable achievements of the American experience—including its elements of genuinely democratic grandeur—has to be combined with a willingness to face the appalling legacy of (what else can we call it?) white racism. This does not make American society uniquely or exceptionally evil; but it's a thread of evil that runs prominently through our history, and one about which we should indeed be remorseful.

JEFF WEINTRAUB
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA

NOT JUST URBAN

Tucker Carlson is right on target about the futility of Jack Kemp's strategy to increase support among African-American voters ("Jack Kemp, Apostle to the Unconvertible," Sept. 16). As long as the blue suits at campaign headquarters continue to equate "black" with the inner city, welfare, and poverty, the goal of increasing support among black voters will prove elusive.

This myopic, stereotypical view of African Americans completely ignores the social and economic mobility of the suburban black middle class, whose values, aspirations, and entrepreneurial dreams are in sync with the GOP's message of equal opportunity, economic growth, lower taxes, quality education, personal responsibility, safe neighborhoods and drug-free schools. Clearly, black middle-class voters should be added to the coveted mix of suburban voters and "soccer moms." Poll after poll shows that these voters share Republican values and ideas. They are sick and tired of being taken for granted by the Democrats while being invisible to Republicans. Black voters' disaffection with failed Democratic policies of government dependency, coupled with the growing acceptance that a sustainable Republican majority cannot be achieved without increased support from black voters, provides a wonderful synergy and opportunity. This in turn begs the question: Why is the Dole-Kemp campaign not exploiting this opportunity?

FAYE M. ANDERSON
WASHINGTON, DC

PEROT'S AESTHETICS

I was more amused by the quotation Ross Perot got right than by the one he got wrong ("Perot's Familiar Misquotations," Sept. 16). He ended his acceptance speech with a ringing poetic quatrain: "A bell is no bell till you ring it! A song is no song till you sing it! And love in your heart isn't put there to stay—love isn't love till you give it away!" In case you don't recognize this, it is the introduction to the reprise of "Sixteen Going on Seventeen" from *The Sound of Music*. Makes you wonder about Perot's aesthetics.

JUDITH GREEN
SAN JOSE, CA

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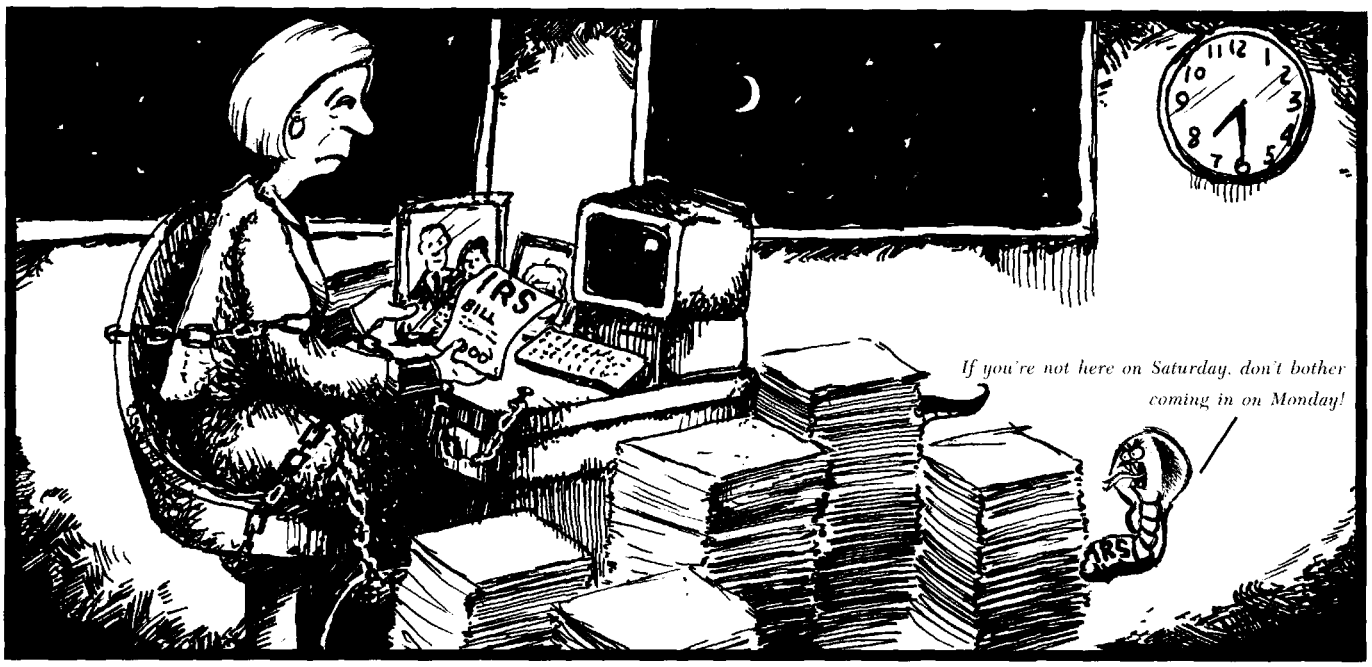

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Our income tax chains mothers to a job — and threatens our right to economic liberty.

While we argue about taxing the rich, nobody ever defines who the rich really are. According to the IRS, that definition was an annual income of $5 million in 1940. By 1992, that moved down scale to a very blue-collar $52,500. As the debate over making sure the rich pay their "fair" share rages on, we are ignoring the impact of rising taxation upon the American working *family*.

It now takes two incomes to support a family at a standard which once required only one income just 30 years ago. In the process our national debt has exploded and we have nothing to show for it.

Like citizens of Rome, we lose democratic *and* economic freedoms through taxes.

Democracy was once the light of economic freedom — the way out of serfdom where the state took 50 percent of your earnings. Today, that economic freedom is lost with the state extracting nearly 40 percent of the income from the average American family. It was only 25 percent in the 1960s! In Rome, it was obvious. Tax laws chained you to your profession and your location, the better to find you to collect Caesar's due.

Many women today are chained to their jobs because they lost their economic freedom to stay home and raise their children during early, formative years. If we truly care about the people of this nation and our future, we must honestly look at the impact of big government and the rising demands for taxation upon our middle class.

Mothers always pay for the foolishness of governments.

War is only the most common example. In government's all consuming quest to promise more to voters — mothers, women, and the American family have come out the losers. When we enslave that segment of society, our prosperity collapses like Rome, Spain, Russia, and so many others that have gone before us.

Promise freedom. Deliver serfdom.

History warns that economic decay has always been created by the extravagance of the state and in its wake inevitably follows social decay and rising crime. Only a fool ignores the lessons of history and that is why it tends so often to repeat.

We have a rare and brief moment in time — perhaps our last window of opportunity to reflect and change the course of posterity. To ignore the warnings of history, after the social and economic decay we have witnessed in the past 30 years, is to invite the fate suffered by all previous democracies — suicide. Society will be torn apart unless the taxation demands upon the American family are not tempered and controlled. If we do not restore economic freedom to the American family, we will become a mere footnote in the annals of the 21st century.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

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the weekly Standard

"My Kingdom for a Photo-Op!"

The key word is "consistent." Bob Dole is consistent. His campaign consistently misuses—or just plain throws away—its best weapons against President Clinton.

At the Detroit Economic Club on September 24, Dole's men provided him with a speech identifying Clinton as a grimly determined "old-style, dyed-in-the-wool, big-spending liberal committed to a government that spends and spends and taxes and taxes." We'll discount for the permissible exaggerations of American electioneering and grant the ballpark accuracy of the "liberal" charge. The speech may have been pushing it a bit rhetorically, but it wasn't exactly wrong.

But the flip side of Dole's argument *was* exactly wrong. Our liberal, liberal, liberal president, Dole bravely insisted, defying a view widely held even among Clinton's admirers, is *not* "a finger-in-the-wind politician." Instead, he is a man of principle. People who "say that Bill Clinton will take any position, say anything as a matter of political convenience"—those people are wrong. The president, Dole announced, is consistent.

WE NOW HAVE A PRESIDENT WHO IS SO BOTTOMLESSLY CYNICAL IN WORD AND DEED THAT HE HAS RENDERED ALMOST QUAINT THE IDEA OF POLITICAL INTEGRITY IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

And the president is pleased to agree. The day before Dole spoke in Detroit, Clinton sat for a long PBS interview with the always polite and straight-faced Jim Lehrer. Lehrer pressed him repeatedly on the "finger-in-the-wind" issue. People complain that you float with public opinion rather than challenge it, Lehrer suggested. Most voters believe that you speak and act as you do for reasons of election, not conviction. Few voters believe you are honest or constant.

That is "total nonsense," the president replied. There is not "a single, solitary shred of evidence of anything dishonest that I have done in my public life." Hundreds of distinct evidentiary shreds run instantly through one's mind, of course. But wait: It gets better. "If you look at what I've done as president," Clinton explained, "it's remarkably consistent with what I did as governor and very consistent with what I said I would do" in 1992. And "I don't mind being unpopular or controversial." And "I have tried to be very consistent."

What an unscrupulous liar he is. And it is much the worst thing about him, too—not the implacable (and, therefore, in some sense honorable) leftism that Bob Dole's speechwriters have tried to conjure up. We now have a president who is so bottomlessly cynical in word and deed that he has rendered almost quaint the idea of political integrity in the White House. The country's resistance to presidential flim-flammery appears nearly exhausted. Each new outrage is reported with ever more supine resignation and indifference by the press.

Such as this one: The week before he asserted his unimpeachable truthfulness on PBS, Bill Clinton abruptly announced a (literally) enormous policy decision simply and solely to create a good campaign photo-op. By executive fiat, he created the largest national monument in the continental United States, roughly the size of Delaware. It is the "Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument," a place laden, the president proclaimed, with an abundance of (get out your *National Geographics*) packrat middens and the fossils of Cretaceous brackish water mollusks. It is a place that offers "an extraordinary opportunity to study plant speciation and community dynamics independent of climatic variables." A place, indeed, "where distance and aridity have been pitted against our dreams and courage."

Actually, it is a place so flat, desolate, and death-like that they filmed the *Planet of the Apes* movies there a quarter-century ago. And it is a place—1.7 million acres of south-central Utah—that has been the subject of a battle between environmentalists and Utah residents and officials concerned with free land use and

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economic development for almost 20 years. The federal Bureau of Land Management began studying the area's potential wilderness designation, the government's most restrictive land-use status, in 1978. The bureau initially identified slightly more than 3 million acres of Utah that appeared to meet wilderness criteria. A final 1991 report to Congress recommended formal wilderness designation for about 2 million acres.

But Congress has taken no action since. So the Bureau of Land Management, following Clinton administration policy, has been managing Utah's disputed land—all of it and more, 5.7 million acres total—as if it *were* an official wilderness. And in the absence of legislation to the contrary, that's the way this territory will stay: protected as much as land-management law allows. Why, then, President Clinton's urgency to "rescue" the area on September 18, six weeks before a national election? Could politics have something to do with it?

AP

Not at all, insists the president. There is a proposed coal mine in the area, his people say. Yes, there is. About 20 miles north of Big Water, Utah, a company called Andalex Resources holds federal mining rights to a portion of America's largest untapped energy reserve. There are 62 billion tons of coal down there, low-sulfur, low-ash, low-moisture, hot-burning coal—precisely the kind of "clean coal" alternative Bill Clinton pounded George Bush for ignoring in 1992. About 15 percent of this coal is recoverable, and that's enough coal to power the entire state of Utah for a millennium. The Utah Geological Survey reports that the net present value of just that coal that sits under acreage set aside in trust for the state's school system is between $640 million and $1.1 billion.

The "environmental impact statement" process by which the federal government might grant its final approval for the Andalex mine is now six years old. A final draft from the Bureau of Land Management was due early next year. So were we about to strip-mine paradise? Against the chance that rapacious nature-hater Bob Dole might be president, did Bill Clinton need so quickly to invoke his authority as preservationist in chief?

No. The Andalex mine is not *in* paradise. Standing on the *Planet of the Apes* landscape, you cannot even see it. The site is at the bottom of a deep, circular canyon. It would occupy all of 40 surface acres of the president's new 1.7-million-acre monument, and would otherwise be undetectable but for truck traffic on a single road. And those 40 acres have never qualified for wilderness designation. In fact, they were long ago explicitly considered for the honor by the Bureau of Land Management—and were rejected.

Never mind. It is the plain *idea* of a coal mine that environmentalists despise. And that's enough for this White House, well aware of the public-opinion-poll power of any "Earth-friendly" initiative. So off the president went to sign his proclamation. He went to the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon is in Arizona. But it looks better than south-central Utah on color TV. Robert Redford was there. A naturalist named Terry Tempest Williams warmed up the crowd. "These lands are alive," she said. "This action fully restores our souls. Listen. This silence." At which point, according to the *Washington Post*'s Joel Achenbach, a helicopter roared overhead to announce Bill Clinton's arrival.

No significant elected official from Utah attended the ceremony. The night before it took place, the White House was still telling those officials that no decision had been made about their land. Even Rep. Bill Orton, Utah's lone Democratic congressman, in whose economically disadvantaged district the mine is located, was kept in the dark. The *New York Times* was better informed. The morning of Clinton's Grand Canyon spectacle, the *Times* ran a tidy little editorial praising the move, parroting the administration's defense of it and trashing the Andalex mine. Tom Robinson, conservation director of the Grand Canyon Trust, later informed the *Salt Lake Tribune* that he'd been told the new monument had tested well in Clinton-Gore campaign polls. No other American newspaper has followed this interesting lead.

So. Is the coal mine dead? The president implied as much in his Grand Canyon remarks. The question was left to interior secretary Bruce Babbitt for amplification. "I think what [Clinton] said about the mine is quite clear," Babbitt mumbled. "He says mining is appropriate in some places, inappropriate in others." But is the coal mine dead—yes, no, or maybe? "All of the above," replied the secretary. So in fact mining is

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not ruled out by the president's action.

Yes, President Clinton is remarkably consistent in his craven inconsistency. When the presidential debates get underway, it would be nice if Bob Dole said so. Bill Clinton may or may not be a dyed-in-the-wool liberal. But God almighty, is he dishonest. It's the veracity, stupid.

—David Tell, for the Editors

COURAGE? *BILL CLINTON?*

by Carl M. Cannon

Seattle

At the start of his most recent bus trip—this one down the Washington and Oregon coast—President Clinton stood in a steady Northwest rain giving his standard stump speech to a few thousand hardy Democrats assembled at Seattle's Pike Place fishmarket.

The best view in the house was from the press filing center, on the second floor of a building that overlooked the square. Understandably, a handful of onlookers wandered inside the press area, including an urchin named Colin Goodman, who was looking upon Bill Clinton with genuine awe. Together we noticed the president turn down the offer of an umbrella and remove a baseball cap someone had given him. I wondered aloud why Clinton was doing that. "He's the president," young Colin piped up. "He's brave!"

Personal courage seems like a logical issue to arise in the 1996 presidential campaign—especially when the two candidates are Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. And so it has, but not the way one might have expected. Colin is only nine, so his enthusiasm for his president is understandable, but those of us who have been traveling with the candidates have heard a lot of talk about courage. Almost all of it has come from Democrats.

In every town, every state, and every event, the warm-up speakers introducing the president, reading carefully from White House-provided texts and talking points, have stressed Bill Clinton's "bravery" and Bill Clinton's "courage." On the bus trips, when Al Gore is along, these speakers then turn over the microphone to the vice president, who adds "toughness" to the courage riff. Recently, the president himself has taken up the theme, gently touting his lionheartedness in interviews.

"I just read a book called *Undaunted Courage*," Democratic representative Timothy J. Roemer told a crowd in Michigan City, Ind., at the conclusion of Clinton's August train trip. "On welfare reform, the president showed undaunted courage!"

Earlier that day, Michigan anti-smoking activist Kathy Block warmed up a crowd standing by the railroad tracks by telling them, "It takes great courage to take on the tobacco companies!" In Battle Creek, Mich., Mark Schauer, a local Democrat running for the state legislature, perhaps overcome by the town's name, not only used "courage" and "bravery" to describe Bill Clinton's actions on Medicare, but even ad-libbed a little. "This president is tough, battle-tested," he said.

Now "battle-tested," unlike "courage," has a meaning that is quite specific. Bob Dole is battle-tested. Literally. Clinton, by contrast, received his draft notice in 1968, though he denied for years that he'd gotten one. He kept his hometown draft board at bay by joining the ROTC. In 1969, when the draft was curtailed, he dropped out of that program. He took his chances in the draft lottery that year, although, just in case, he called on an uncle, Raymond Clinton, to see about a billet in the naval reserves. He dropped that plan after getting a high lottery number. He went to England, where he participated in antiwar demonstrations.

Some of the Clintonites present had the decency to look sheepish when they heard the term "battle-tested" applied to the president. But not for long. The entire trip in August was an exercise in celebrating—and devaluing—bravery. During the first two days, the president would introduce people the campaign had dubbed "local heroes." A couple of these people surely qualified, especially the paralyzed cop shot years before in the line of duty. Others were just, well, people: Someone who started a business. A mom who got off welfare. A woman whose heroism seemed to consist of her persistence in writing Bill Clinton in 1992 and urging him to visit her town.

At the Grand Canyon in mid-September, University of Colorado professor Charles Wilkinson said in his warm-up speech that it took "presidential courage and wisdom and vision" for Clinton's predecessors to set aside America's crown jewels such as Yosemite and Yellowstone. Clinton, he said, was following the legacy of greats like Theodore Roosevelt in designating 1.7 million acres of federal land in Utah for protection. Those present, Wilkinson told the crowd, were "blessed" to be able to witness "the brave act about to be made."

The land in question is pristine wilderness with untold natural and archaeological riches. Preserving it

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may be wise, prudent, even inspired. But brave? The forces in opposition to Clinton are a foreign mining conglomerate and Republicans in the Utah delegation. Utah is a state where Clinton ran third in 1992. Moreover, the hasty, campaign-trail decision to create the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument Area generated positive front-page stories all over the West as well as spectacular nightly news TV footage of the president signing a proclamation on the glorious South Rim.

What of the other claims to bravery? Certainly the tobacco lobby can be a formidable political opponent for a member of Congress, particularly in a handful of tobacco states. But with anti-smoking ordinances, initiatives, and lawsuits cropping up all over the country, with the polls overwhelmingly in his favor, and with his FDA-provided cover that he was interested only in curbing teen smoking, was the president's action on tobacco really all that courageous? Meanwhile, the National Rifle Association, another bogeyman Clinton is said to have challenged at great risk to himself, is losing members, money, and clout. And though the gun lobby can still be a force to reckon with in local elections—or even statewide in some southern and western states—there is no longer great risk to a Democratic president in taking on the NRA.

Clinton does have a case regarding last winter's budget fights. It's certainly true that the Republicans were surprised that Clinton held fast on the final numbers, not only with Medicare, but also with some of his pet projects, such as AmeriCorps—and did so even as House Democrats were blasting him for agreeing to balance the budget even in principle. But "resolve" would probably be a better word than "courage," which is defined by Webster's as "the attitude of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult or painful instead of withdrawing from it . . . [the] quality of being fearless or brave."

Interestingly, Clinton's strongest claim to political courage might lie not in domestic policy, but in foreign policy. On NAFTA, Haiti, the Mexican peso bailout, and even, belatedly, in Bosnia, he appears to have ignored public-opinion polls and just gone ahead and followed what he and his advisers believed were the right, long-term policies that suited American principles and interests. Clinton himself seems to realize this is his best case, because although he mentions foreign affairs only in passing on the stump, in a recent PBS interview with Jim Lehrer, he emphasized these issues while expanding on the courage theme by insisting that he'd repeatedly made the "tough decisions."

To show courage in domestic policy, he could have vetoed the anti-gay marriage law, a bill he hated and denounced. Instead, he signed it at 1:30 a.m.—literally in the middle of the night—after returning from a trip on which every speaker lauded his bravery. He signed that bill without comment and made no reference to it in his Saturday radio address. The traveling press corps found out about the signing when White House press secretary Mike McCurry handed them a piece of paper while the president was speaking on a football field before a homecoming game at a high school in South Dakota.

Bill Clinton never played high school football himself, just as he never went to war. But you can still do good for your school by playing in the band and working as student-body president, which is what Clinton did. Bob Dole must understand this, as warriors have since the time of Homer, who said that "even when someone battles hard, there is an equal portion for one who lingers behind, and in the same honor are held both the coward and the brave man." So then why such pains by the Clinton campaign to transform the one who stayed behind into the brave man? Maybe the answer can be found in Stephen Crane's great novel of the Civil War. "At times, he regarded the wounded soldiers in an envious way," Crane wrote. "He conceived persons with torn bodies to be peculiarly happy. He wished that he, too, had a wound, a red badge of courage."

Carl M. Cannon covers the White House for the **Baltimore Sun.**

Revolutionaries in Retreat

by Matthew Rees

Republicans are exiting the first Congress they've controlled in 40 years in terror-stricken retreat. Senate majority leader Trent Lott says they just want to get their work done and go home. He and others admit that their reluctance to risk political fights carries a cost. They probably erred in passing a bill forcing insurance companies to give equal treatment to mental-health claims, Lott concedes, and his deputy, Don Nickles, says the GOP may have passed bad legislation in its haste to leave Washington. Yet no one favors a

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strategy of confrontation, which could lead to a repeat of last winter's government shutdowns.

Rep. Mark Souder, one of the most intransigent Republican freshmen, gives a taste of the new GOP tone when he warns against a new round of brinkmanship. Indeed, the prevailing Republican fear is that a repeat of last year's confrontations would cause bad press and could cost the GOP control of Congress. Thus does political fear trump principle. The Republicans rationalize their leftward drift on spending and health care as the way to keep the Democrats in the minority.

Maybe it will. In any case, it's been clear for weeks that the GOP would pay almost any price for Democratic cooperation on the budget. Just two years ago, Bob Dole skillfully blocked Democratic initiatives in the weeks before the 1994 election, but this time Republicans are handing their opponents policy victories. House Appropriations chairman Bob Livingston acknowledged as much to reporters, saying, "Chances are the president is going to get a lot of what he's asked for. That's in the interest of getting out of here." The Democrats are enjoying this. A grinning Senate minority leader Tom Daschle calls Republicans "extremely cooperative" and adds, "We kind of anticipated that in their rush to get out of town they would agree to what we had been asking for."

DEMOCRATS MAY MOAN ABOUT THE EXCESSES OF THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESS, BUT THEY KNOW THEY'VE MADE OUT WELL FOR A MINORITY.

When a Democratic leader lauds Republicans, it's obvious they've gone astray. Democrats may moan about the excesses of the Republican Congress, but they know they've made out well for a minority. At the administration's request, $6.5 billion in new spending for education and human services was added to an appropriations bill, and an amendment passed requiring health insurers to cover 48-hour hospital stays for new mothers. This came on top of an increase in the minimum wage, a softening of the immigration bill, and a general loosening of the purse strings. "If you consider the '94 election to be the equivalent of the Allied landing at Normandy," says Stephen Moore of the Cato Institute, "the last three weeks have been the political equivalent of the Germans' driving the Allies off the beaches."

But if you're looking for dissension in GOP ranks, you won't find much. Souder's view is representative. He fits the stereotype of a House Republican freshman: fiercely conservative, devoutly religious, sometimes annoyingly principled. During last winter's budget showdown he was one of a handful of Republicans who voted against the GOP budget that reopened the government, decrying it as soft on spending.

Today, he freely admits Republicans have caved. And while he wishes they hadn't, he recognizes the political constraints they face. Rather than advocate actions that could result in a shutdown, he hopes to repair this year's damage with a bill that cuts spending next year (assuming Congress is Republican). "Last year we pushed the system about as hard as it can be pushed and look where it got us," he says. He likens the current situation to an arm-wrestling bout in which one side is nearly exhausted. Instead of expending all remaining energy when there's little hope of staving off defeat—much less winning—the course of wisdom is to lose gracefully and gear up for the next bout.

The bitter irony about the Congress's lurch and broader disarray is that much of it is due to Republicans. Take the mental-health mandate. Sen. Pete Domenici, Republican of New Mexico, was chief sponsor of the amendment. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce called this mandate "absolutely inconsistent" with a "private, market-based health care system." But when Domenici, who has a daughter who suffers from mental illness, attached the amendment to an appropriations bill, only 15 senators (all Republicans) voted against it. In the House, Republican leaders told their members to support the measure, promising it wouldn't survive the conference committee, and only 17 declined. But House Republican conferees, tired of being asked to do the Senate's dirty work, left the mandate in the final appropriations bill.

More than tension between the chambers was involved here. When Mark Isakowitz, lobbyist for the National Federation of Independent Business, pointed out the problems with the mental-health provision, notably the burden it would impose on small businesses, GOP leaders told him "politics" made it hard to vote no. In fact, with influential Republican deficit hawks like Domenici and Rep. John Kasich behind the measure—and the potential political damage from a "mean-spirited" vote on everyone's mind—passage was never in doubt. Neil Trautwein, who watches health care for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, deplores the Republicans' surrender on mental health but says it is nothing new: "We've spent much of this Congress trying to keep the government out of benefit policy, and it's clearly been disappointing."

Then there's illegal immigration. The bill was mostly noncontroversial within the GOP, except for a provision sponsored by Rep. Elton Gallegly of Califor-

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nia allowing states to bar children of illegal immigrants from public school. Bob Dole strongly favored the provision, as did House members from California, but Senate Democrats threatened to filibuster the bill as long as it contained the politically sensitive measure. This prompted Sen. Alan Simpson, a Wyoming Republican and longtime immigration hawk, to push privately to remove the amendment and improve the bill's chances of passing.

A stormy meeting with Dole campaign manager Scott Reed on September 12 produced no agreement, and Simpson railed. Those advising Dole on the issue were "boneheaded" and guilty of "childish logic," "trickery," and "cynicism." The same could be said of Simpson, who had previously agreed to the Gallegly amendment. House speaker Newt Gingrich fought to retain it, but Simpson's public break opened the door for others, and on September 19, Republicans agreed to remove the amendment from the bill and consider it separately. Clinton is now likely to sign the bill, denying Dole one of the few weapons he could have used against the president in California.

The silver lining to these dark clouds is that all this radical moderation may actually dispel some of the public's fears about Republicans. If as a result the GOP preserves its congressional majorities, the late-term sellouts will soon look like a bargain. Anything less, however, and the ballyhooed "Republican revolution" may come to seem like much ado about nothing. ♦

Greenspan Places Some Bets

by Irwin M. Stelzer

If you think it's easy to understand breaking economic news, consider the following lead in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Sales of existing homes remained robust in August, slipping just 0.5 percent from July." Robust and slipping both? Well, yes. It seems that the slippage from July still left home sales 2 percent higher than last year at the same time. And that this increase from last August occurred despite the fact that mortgage rates have gone up a full percentage point, to 8 percent.

The difficulty of interpreting the signals flashed by economic data explains why Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan is held in such high regard. Somehow Greenspan has managed to process the reams of information he receives, separate the wheat from the chaff, and come up with answers that have helped keep the economy growing steadily, unemployment at low levels, and inflation at bay. *Business Week* said it best: "It really doesn't get any better than this: first-half growth at 3.4 percent, the jobless rate close to a two-decade low, core inflation at a three-decade low, and the Dow headed toward 5900. Hey, let's party." Add the fact that inventories are at the lowest level ever recorded, and you have an outlook that is decidedly bright.

Which has many financial analysts wondering just why Greenspan went to such lengths to persuade his reluctant colleagues not to raise interest rates the other week. The most common explanation is that he didn't want to increase rates during the run-up to the presidential and congressional elections. Certainly Greenspan's stand-pat-ism pleased Bill Clinton, who used it to bolster his contention that America is on the right track: "I think it shows we've got a strong economy with no inflation. I'm glad about that."

THE FED CHAIRMAN'S RELUCTANCE TO RAISE INTEREST RATES MOST LIKELY MEANS HE THINKS THE ECONOMY IS COOLING.

The reaction from the Republican camp was about as confused as the rest of the Dole campaign. Bob Dole is trying to make the case that the economy is growing too slowly and needs the boost he says his proposed 15 percent tax cut will give it. Therefore, he should support the Fed's decision not to slow the economy down by raising interest rates. Indeed, his ebullient running mate, Jack Kemp, threatened "to bang on the Fed" if it raised rates—a blatant political interference in monetary policy that treasury secretary Bob Rubin made sure the administration avoided.

And yet the Dole camp (Kemp excepted) was actually rather hoping that the Fed would move interest rates *up*—thereby implicitly suggesting that the economy could not continue to grow at its present pace without triggering inflation unless Dole's tax plan is adopted.

How much all of this affects Greenspan no one can say with certainty. Not very much, I would guess. For, although he's no political naif, Greenspan is not given

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to subordinating his fight against inflation to the desires of Washington's pols. More likely, his reading of the economic tea leaves is different from that of the presidents of the regional Federal Reserve banks. Eight of these bankers thought interest rates should go up—a fact leaked to Reuters and then to the public, causing Greenspan to request an FBI investigation to track down the source of that leak.

Greenspan is betting that the economy is already cooling, reducing any inflationary pressures that may have built up in the second quarter, when the economy moved ahead at a 4.7 percent annual rate. Indeed, there are signs that the demand for goods and services has tapered off. Foreign buyers, beset by slow growth, are pulling back on their purchases of American-made goods: Exports fell 3.6 percent in July. American consumers also reined back a bit during the summer, causing retail sales to drop 0.2 percent in August. With credit-card debt and delinquencies at record levels, consumers may be ready for a breather.

Michael Ramirez

It is also true that the economy has some spare productive capacity to act as a buffer should demand increase. Manufacturing plants are operating at only a bit more than 82 percent of capacity, which means that any increase in demand can be met with stepped-up output rather than price increases. Mix in the fact that idle capacity in many industries overseas is available to meet American needs, and you have a recipe for price stability.

Or so Greenspan thinks. But in truth, he is betting against the odds. Consumer confidence remains high. Real incomes are rising. Stocks on dealers' shelves are low. Labor markets are tight, with employers offering sign-on bonuses to attract workers as various as computer programmers and supermarket checkers. Business continues to invest in new equipment.

In short, confident consumers, with increasingly secure jobs and money in their pockets, may be about to descend on the nation's malls and shops. With few goods on hand, retailers will have to order from factories that are having trouble finding workers. Wages will go up, retailers will for the first time in a long time feel able to pass along any price increases, and inflation will again become a problem.

Greenspan may have made a second bet—a bet that he can solve these problems if they occur by raising rates, perhaps at the next meeting of the Fed's Open Market Committee on November 13. It's a very chancy bet. The effect of interest-rate increases is not instantaneous. It takes time for the higher cost of money to make itself felt—time during which inflation can get up a good head of steam. Allan Meltzer, a professor at Carnegie Mellon, estimates that it takes six to nine months for monetary tightening to affect output, and 18 to 24 months for it to begin to bring inflation down.

Unfortunately, if Greenspan proves wrong, prices will be on the upswing just when it is likely that the budgetary discipline imposed in recent years on federal spending will be relaxed. Bill Clinton already shows signs of impatience with the constraints of balanced-budget targets. If reelected—and especially if the Democrats regain actual or de facto control of Congress—he will probably ease those constraints. He has promised tax cuts to families, students, and other groups; he has announced plans to undo parts of the welfare-reform package he recently signed; he wants to spend more on education; and Daschle, Gephardt, and Hillary undoubtedly have plans of their own.

Dole, meanwhile, can't seem to find any places to cut spending to prevent his across-the-board tax cut from becoming a budget-buster. He even promised a New Mexico audience to keep the woefully wasteful Department of Energy intact—a gambit that pleased the crowd, eager to preserve the jobs that DOE's labs generate in New Mexico, but that startled congressional Republicans who have been trying to eliminate a useless agency that costs the taxpayers $18 billion per year.

If all of these inflationary pressures do bubble up, Greenspan will have lost his bets. But his track record is so good that, at least for now, it would be foolish to bet against him.

Irwin M. Stelzer is a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He writes frequently on economic matters for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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IGNOBLE NOBELMAN

The Saga of Carleton Gajdusek, a Brilliant Scientist—and an Accused Pedophile

By Claudia Winkler

On October 8, the state of Maryland will put on trial a distinguished scientist. Daniel Carleton Gajdusek, winner of a Nobel prize for medicine in 1976, famed for his work with primitive New Guinea tribes, and a man whose friends describe him as "some kind of genius," stands charged with molesting two of his adopted sons.

The case against him appears unusually strong. At the trial, prosecutors expect the older boy, now 23, to testify to persistent and unwanted sexual contact over some six years, beginning his first day in Gajdusek's house when he was 14. They also intend to play for the jury a taped telephone conversation in which, according to court documents, Gajdusek confesses to the youth, apologizes, and begs him to lie if questioned.

Even so, if the jury convicts, a flood of character witnesses is bound to come forward at sentencing. Most compelling by far will be warm testimony in support of the defendant, now 73, from others of his more than three dozen adopted children, most of them sons.

Some of these boys—or rather, men, now—so admire the benefactor who brought them to America from remote Pacific islands that they named their own children after him or sent their kin to be raised in his home near Washington, D.C., and educated in the United States. Their devotion should make a powerful impression on the court.

Whatever happens at the trial, however, an extraordinary window into the mind of Carleton Gajdusek is already available. Over the course of a long career, Gajdusek wrote thousands of pages of journals. Some of his travel diaries were published in small editions by his longtime employer, the National Institutes of Health, and placed in the National Library of Medicine, where the public can read them. Along with another three journals at the Library of Congress, these amount to some 20 volumes, spanning 22 years.

Together, they are evidence of a remarkable life, of large talents deployed to ambitious ends—some noble, some self-serving, some illicit—in settings as exotic as any under the sun. They are also the story of a quintessential modern man, an intellectual choosing for himself an unconventional course, outside the framework of religion and in determined opposition to traditional morality.

UPI/Bettman

The new prize-winner in 1976 with his sons

The Diaries of Carleton Gajdusek

The publicly available journals are a record of prodigious work. They cover the years 1954-76, picking up the thread of Gajdusek's career when he was 31 and breaking off when he was 53. By the time they begin, their author was already marked for stardom. The elder son of Slovakian immigrants in

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Yonkers, N.Y., he had early shown brilliance and a passion for science. An entomologist aunt encouraged him, and he earned a degree at the University of Rochester in 1943, then studied pediatrics at Harvard, with postdoctoral stints as a pediatrician with the occupation forces in Germany and as a researcher in virology at the California Institute of Technology under Linus Pauling and Max Delbruck.

During the Korean War, he worked for the Navy, which had sent him to medical school, and he played a leading role in research on a disease then ravaging both troops and civilians in the war zone, hemorrhagic fever. A few years later, his supervisor would recommend him for a job at the National Institutes of Health, calling him "one of the unique individuals in medicine who combines the intelligence of a near-genius with the adventurous spirit of a privateer."

Gajdusek got the job and remained associated with NIH for the rest of his career. By the time the journals end, he was chief of the Laboratory of Central Nervous System Studies at NIH—the position he held until he was placed on leave this April, after his arrest.

The journal years, then, saw Gajdusek establish his scientific reputation. His most famous work had to do with disorders of the central nervous system—starting in the late 1950s with kuru, the strange New Guinean disease that led to the discovery of a new class of infectious agent, the slow virus, for which he won his Nobel prize. But even as he was becoming an internationally recognized authority on ailments like Alzheimer's and Creutzfeldt-Jakob, a quite different professional purpose motivated the annual travels recounted in the journals.

Indeed, the main subject of the diaries is Gajdusek's study of primitive peoples. In the Amazon and the Sahara, on Melanesian atolls and in the mountains of Afghanistan, and again and again in the highlands of New Guinea, he visited long-isolated tribes and came to believe that he could derive from them critical insights into human development. Using a blend of medicine and anthropology that he called ethnopediatrics, Gajdusek sought to illuminate man's "programming," as distinct from his physical makeup. The goal was no less than to "break the code of input" of information into the nervous system of the infant and child. "In a few remaining societies wherein civilization and the major religions of mankind have not yet set their pattern of imprint upon the social fabric in which the child is reared," he wrote in 1966,

> *we still have situations and practices which expose the infant and the young child to markedly different languages of touch, smell, kiss, voice, and embrace; nursing, feeding, and swaddling; gesture, story, dance, myth, music, and song; to differing grammars of speech, kinship, and designation; and different patterns of manners, morals, and etiquette which each direct the developing nervous system uniquely along paths which will be denied to our future observation and possible realm of experience. Herein are passing experiments in human potentiality which we cannot recreate for ethical, moral, and legal reasons, nor can we ever hope to reproduce their equivalent in the lab.*

Gajdusek was determined to document the experience of the tribes he visited before their cultures eroded in contact with the outside world. This required systematic work. Often, he would interview every child or every person in a village, securing from each a blood sample, a medical history, a family tree, a photograph, and fingerprints. But he was equally convinced that wide-ranging, unedited observation would ultimately prove to be a precious source of understanding. With his movie camera and tape recorder—and above all in his field journal—he captured pell-mell the sights and interactions of his days. His attention roamed, omnivorous, over any and all features of the host cultures, but it returned most persistently to children.

The Doctor and the Boys

> *We have been swimming on a lonely stretch of coast, along which [are] strewn the wrecks of U.S. World War II landing barges, with the spectacular coast of Humboldt Bay before us, and with the offshore islands and mountains of Australian New Guinea adding drama to our private beach. We swam from 3:00 to 6:30 p.m.—more horseplay than swimming—and I found, to my pleasure, that I was living closely to the lives of these boys. As a fat, aging and inept man, past my youth and my prime, I can still find no difficulties with my Pied Piper tunes, the sincerest notes in my repertoire! All else is but exercise for these tunes, and all work is but practice for the pipes. (1959)*

To say that children are the chief concern of a pediatrician may seem merely to state the obvious. But in the case of Carleton Gajdusek, the interest in children that determined his choice of specialty was central to his personal life, to his very being.

Children and adolescents, most of them boys, fill these pages. They are the writer's patients and the objects of his anthropological observation. They are his helpers, working as guides, interpreters, infor-

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mants about language and mores, medical assistants, and "cargo boys," carrying his medicines and cameras, his typewriter, objects for barter, food, and miscellaneous equipment on his treks through the bush. They surround him as soon as he enters a village and sprawl about him as he types his journal at night. And time and again, he calls them his "friends." Many of them figure repeatedly over the years, sensitively evoked and mentioned by name—Anua and Wanevi, Jesus Raglmar, Koiye and Caesario and especially Mbagintao, first of the boys whom Gajdusek adopted and took to America, who chose for himself the Western name Ivan.

BOYS FILL THESE PAGES. THEY ARE HIS PATIENTS, HIS ASSISTANTS, HIS GUIDES AND INTERPRETERS, HIS FRIENDS, AND FINALLY HIS SONS.

One strand of these friendships is Gajdusek's concern for "his" boys' futures. As their own cultures come under pressure from civilization, their best hope, he concludes, lies in education. Although he teaches some of the boys to read and write, he often expresses frustration that he hasn't the means to do more for them. And he worries about their falling prey to drunkenness, "a common pattern of despair" in New Guinea.

Another striking feature of these relationships is their emotional intensity. A few quotations illustrate this. In Iran in 1954, Gajdusek learned of the death of one of his patients back home. "And, that Charlie Reddington is dead—that this lad, in whom I always saw more ability than he possessed, that he has left his complex problems eternally unsolved—is a fact that lives with me hourly," he writes:

> *Others of my patients with whom I lived and whose lives are forever deeply entwined in my own, have passed on . . . and all live on in me as I approach each new baby, each sick child. For these children I feel a grief—yet it is akin to joy in my memory of them. . . . There is a dignity and a proud finality to these short lives. In my grief, I feel glad that Charlie has solved his life in this way! That he asked his mother to tell me about his plight when his downhill spiral began to steepen its slope is for me the greatest gift I could wish to receive from anyone. Thank you Charlie!*

In 1962, Gajdusek was reunited with one of his first cargo boys, by this time grown. "With his wife pregnant, [Wanevi] is extremely tactful not to 'butt in' on the younger boys now usurping the role he previously held with me," he writes. "However, he shows up regularly,

> *makes sure that he gives me all the support he can, and is as true and considerate and tactful a friend as I could possibly find. Reading Proust and all the concern for manners and method, I can find nothing more careful or cautious, sensitive or considerate than this careful "not too much nor too little" appearance of Wanevi, his cautious pride not to be considered "one of the youngsters" yet his intense desire to remain intimate and to catch me alone whenever possible for quiet talks. He keeps his eye on things from a distance and shows up when I most need his help. . . . How wonderful it has been to have had Wanevi as a boy, as a youth, and now as a mature man as my friend!*

And in 1976, he reflected on Ivan Mbagintao's difficulties adjusting to the United States. "I now see how blind love can make one, for Ivan's linguistic and abstractive inadequacies are glaringly apparent to an outside observer," he writes sadly. "It is only those who are very near to him

> *who see his sterling virtues of devotion, keen perception and amazing non-verbal insights which he possesses. It is surely expecting too much to have others go out of their way to exploit these difficult-to-exploit abilities. . . . Just what to expect of Ivan and for how long . . . must he have indulgence and outside support, I do not know. Considering how many of our own need the same, including many of our 'best,' I have no Puritanism . . . in this matter and am prepared to cautiously support him for my lifetime.*

But to acknowledge Gajdusek's rare power to attract and communicate with children, as well as his capacity for affection and altruistic concern for his young friends, is not to tell the whole story. There is something else here as well. There is a hungering, almost obsessive quality to his interest in children that comes through again and again.

Many times, the diarist singles out as the high point of an expedition an encounter with a boy; or he expresses frustration at having had too little contact with children. In Tehran in 1954, he writes that it is "incidental moments" that justify "my giving this portion of my life to work here"—moments like "the disappointed clinging of Anargol Duryakhu, the 13-year-old at Balkh, on learning that I was soon to depart" or "my utter helpless despair at the smile of the four year old lad with ascites, palpable edema and an intrabdominal mass at Jurm." The latter was an "epiphany" that "stirred the roots of my spirit."

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Flying over the Middle East in 1960, Gajdusek stared down on the patios and villages he was leaving and "looked wide-eyed and longing for the children within these round walls, their laughter and lewdness, their shyness and coyness, their open-eyed friendship and curiosity, which I have known so well." To be "surrounded by children," he wrote on Tongariki Island in 1965, was the "greatest reward" of his first 40 years.

Most revealing of all is the entry for June 25, 1959. Contemplating the impending marriage of his friend Lois, he mentions why he himself could not have married her, though she "would certainly thus far have been" his choice. He could not fulfill her needs as a husband, he writes. He has "a roving eye and roving affection" and is uneasy in situations of "socially imposed duty, restriction or obligation." And then this: "What is more important, the Andys, Toms, Wanevis, saucy Aleris, Ilyushas, Konstantines, Peotrs, Sinas, Remis, Akes, and Jorkers still steal all my attention and emotions and motivate my work to the extent that without them the work would suffer . . . I would not be 'me'" (ellipsis in the original).

This, then, is an interest of another order from the most dedicated doctor's love for his patients or the most generous mentor's care for his protégés. This interest is such as to constitute a barrier to marriage, which raises the question whether it has a sexual dimension. The all but explicit answer of the journals is yes.

Many times the diarist states that the true purpose of his "most singularly motivated life" cannot be made plain. It is a "sad reflection of so-called 'civilized' society" that he must keep private the "thoughts and dilemmas of this motivation," he writes in 1960. Sixteen years later, noting the dangers of frankness in a journal that will be read by family, friends, colleagues, and strangers, he calls his diary "the most sincere of all my utterances," but adds: "The major omissions and deletions that I consciously accomplish as I write, make any pretense of total sincerity a farce . . . I am not a Genet, or a Gide, or a Williams" (ellipsis in the original). Just a month before, reading the *Memoirs* of Tennessee Williams, Gajdusek had called them "largely a confession of his homosexual life," adding that Williams "does great service to Gay Liberation from their publication." Jean Genet and André Gide were also openly homosexual writers whose journals Gajdusek had praised.

He is not a Genet or a Gide or a Williams, publicly bearing witness to homosexuality—or pedophilia. But Gajdusek does make explicit the romantic tone of many liaisons, as well as his abundant opportunity for sexual encounters with boys.

Sometimes he writes of a boy in the inflections of a lover: "I look at Piaro and he stares back at me, and we know more of each other than do I and the many of my friends of decades at home. Piaro and I have known each other for but three days" (New Guinea, 1959).

"I leave Angao as darkness sets. . . . There has been much more sensuous and sensual in these two weeks than this innocent flirtation, but nothing as aesthetically perfect as his beauty, nor as emotionally satisfying as our subtle communion for the day. I long to see him again, yet hesitate to go out of my way to do so, resigning myself, in this instance, to memory" (New Guinea, 1959).

"With Luis all day, and although he is quiet and says little, we live close to each other, each one realizing our closeness in the past and embarrassed at the distance that the years have produced between us and knowing that we cannot turn back the clock, we find no need to speak of a relationship already confirmed and never perishable, if not prolongable" (Guam, 1970).

As for opportunity, the legendary hospitality of the South Seas is depicted here in all its enchantment, as nights of music and dancing on the beach break up into casual pairings in the darkness. And more than once, Gajdusek refers to his highland entourage of cargo boys and young hangers-on as a "harem," complete with the attendant "seductions and demands." These pale, though, beside what were to Gajdusek the utterly alluring customs of the Kukukuku.

MANY TIMES THE DIARIST STATES THAT THE TRUE PURPOSE OF HIS "MOST SINGULARLY MOTIVATED LIFE" CANNOT BE MADE PLAIN.

'My Beloved Kuks'

Of all the tribes described in the journals, this "strange and wonderful people" of the New Guinea highlands is the one he writes of with keenest fascination. Distinctive in every particular, not least their sexual mores, the Kukukuku secure a place in his heart as "my beloved Kuks."

The oddities begin with the Kuks' small stature and unusual pattern of growth. They retain childish features far into puberty, then seem suddenly to leap into middle age. Their costume is distinctive, too:

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thick layers of grass aprons (notoriously lice-infested) and capes made of bark, to cover their backs and sides. Being "fastidious adorners of themselves and rather vain," they prize braided headbands, boar's-tusk ornaments worn through their pierced noses, and necklaces of shells, dried grubs, or bright yellow sections of vine.

In personality, they are individualistic, haughty, quick to take offense, curious, acquisitive, unreliable, and disrespectful of authority. The Kuks don't like to work and unabashedly refuse to help or play host, yet are first in line when it comes time to be paid. Gajdusek writes of their "colorful arrogance and 'sport-like' uniqueness akin to the orchid . . . but parasitic, too" (ellipsis in the original). Not surprisingly, perhaps, quarrels and "touchy situations are the rule rather than the exception in Kukukuku society." Sometimes called the Apaches of New Guinea, the Kuks surround their villages with stockades. And they suffer a high rate of suicide.

ALTHOUGH MARRIAGE IS NEAR-UNIVERSAL AMONG THE KUKUKUKU, THE YOUNG BOYS ARE HIGHLY FLIRTATIOUS, FAWNING, EFFEMINATE, AND FORWARD.

But there is another side to their personality, related to their unusual sexual development. Although marriage is near-universal, young boys are rigidly isolated from females, and pre-pubertal boys (some as young as five years old) are highly flirtatious, fawning, effeminate, and forward. They have an especially elaborate repertoire of meaningful glances, stares, rapid eye movements, and evasions.

And their sexual activity has a distinctive goal. As Gajdusek has come to understand Kukukuku customs by 1965 (when they already show signs of breaking down), there is among the boys

> *a real dread of discarding semen, and somewhere in their initiation and early sex-segregated education they must have been instructed that the rubbing of their genitalia and bodies with semen and the ingesting of it is valuable for strength, virility, or some such thing. . . . Fellatio, mutual masturbation and genital to genital contact but not sodomy are the forms of liaison the boys are trained in, and in all cases they seek semen and treat it as the goal of their sex play rather than the orgasm or the play itself.*

Gajdusek first visited remote Kukukuku country in 1957, when few Westerners had ventured there. On that visit, the doctor and his large entourage were greeted with what would emerge as the characteristic form of Kuk hospitality: "insistent and repeated offers of fellatio," the Kuk men "designating a host of willing and ribald youngsters for the role." That Gajdusek was among those who partook is implied in passages like one from 1962, where he notes that Kuk boys' "coy modesty and frightened shyness disappears immediately when they are alone and unobserved by a third party, replaced by prompt and overt genital handling and fellatio."

Gajdusek returned to this "enrapturing" region every year for at least the next ten years. He likened the emotion it awakened in him to what one might feel on "returning home . . . to a treasured estate." "For me," he wrote in 1965, "this repeated return to these study villages of Agakamatasa and Moraei—Simbari and Muniri included—are the high points of my New Guinea experience and so rewarding, so pleasingly new each time, yet familiar and old, and so completely mine for these eight years that I wonder why such reward."

Indeed, he loved it so much that he took a piece of it home. Ivan Mbagintao, who went to live with Gajdusek in Maryland in 1963, was a Simbari Kukukuku.

'Armchair Philosopher of Man'

Reporting to colleagues in Bethesda on his work in New Guinea, Gajdusek explained the priority he placed on his quasi-anthropological researches: The Stone Age cultures he was exploring would soon vanish forever, and with them data of singular value for scientists and "armchair philosophers of man." Gajdusek himself was such a philosopher.

Sometimes his reading is the spur to reflection. It is impossible to peruse these diaries without feeling awe at their author's intellectual range and responsiveness to literature. He reads Lorca in Spanish and Baudelaire in French and, dissatisfied with a translation, vows to get hold of the Russian edition of the New Guinea diaries of a Russian who sojourned there in the 1880s. He reads Sophocles in the highlands ("How wonderful the Greeks!") and Virginia Woolf in Tehran. He reads Faulkner, Forster, Nabokov, Conrad, Sartre, Camus, Sherwood Anderson, an anthology of Chinese classics, and the journals of John Quincy Adams. In the Libyan desert he finishes the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and finds he has run out of books. In the future, he resolves, he will take with him on every

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expedition at least one "massive, 'impossible'" work that will bear rereading, like "the Bible, Proust, Dante, Goethe's *Faust* or *War and Peace*."

Just as often, his meditations are prompted by the events of the day: bitter thoughts on race relations, for example, by the fruitless search for a drink of water, much less a hotel room, for his black cargo boys in the town of Port Moresby in 1957. Inevitably, the grand themes of his intellectual life as portrayed in the journals find echoes in both his reading and his work.

These themes are religion and sex, the civilized and the primitive, sublimation and liberation. Gajdusek ponders them in relation both to his own history and personality and to the world around him. His thoughts take the form of asides, or passages of a paragraph or two, or, rarely, digressions of several pages. The complexity of his views is encapsulated in the juxtaposition of two of his favorite writers: Dostoevsky and Nietzsche.

The subject of religion is continually forced into the foreground by the fact that many of the Westerners present in the haunts of primitive man are missionaries. Sometimes they are Gajdusek's guides or briefers in a new region; sometimes he is a guest in their homes. His attitude toward them evolves in the course of the journals. An impatient, occasionally derisive tone mostly disappears in the early 1960s. After that, while he may express incomprehension or dislike of a given missionary, he seldom indulges in snide remarks about their "pathetic juvenilism" or the "unctuous wails" of their hymns.

Much more consistently, he records his regard for "these amazing dedicated people." And beyond admiring their commitment, Gajdusek actually approves of the work they are doing. The missions, he writes in 1970, "bring in more material wealth, more medicine, education and surely more understanding and love than do any of the secular groups." Most important, they provide a worldview to replace the native faith in magic that quickly breaks down in contact with modernity. Although himself not a Christian, he sees the Christianization of primitive peoples as both inevitable and preferable to their adopting a secular creed like communism. Religious faith, being "logically no different" from native superstition, is well suited to fill the place of the old cosmology. He comes to regard conversion as part of primitive man's necessary renunciation of his past. By 1976, he sees any village without a mission as disadvantaged, left behind in the race to join the modern world.

This utilitarian view of the natives' conversion makes sense in the context of Gajdusek's personal philosophy, which he variously calls "pagan," "heathen," and "existentialist." He expounds on the arbitrariness

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In Stockholm for the Nobel prize ceremony: The eight sons who came along camped in their sleeping bags.

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of all faiths, including faith in science and faith in reason. This is a difficult idea to accept, he writes, especially for "enlightened man," who "shuns the realization that arbitrary faiths of an irrational and unchosen sort should underlie his existence." This tension between man's urge to faith and the reality of arbitrariness is built into "the human condition." Equally intrinsic and inevitable, he believes, is tension between the individual and society.

EVEN GROWING UP HE SCORNED CONVENTION. HE DID NOT VISIT HIS FATHER'S GRAVE SO AS NOT TO "DEFILE" HIS MEMORY WITH "SOCIALIZED MOURNING."

If all values are arbitrary, he himself lives by a creed of individualism, "intensity" (almost a mantra with him), and honesty, despising all socially required hypocrisy. It is a creed with its roots in his childhood, as suggested by this passage from 1972:

> *"Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers," from our Public School No. 5 assembly hall walls comes to mind. In my fiftieth year to heaven, may I begin to find wisdom. The Greco-Roman Pantheon provides me with all the deities to whom I need pray. I have never come to grips with Judaic-Christian-Moslem morality and cosmology. It places too much emphasis on the word, has too little comparative outlook on love, sex and family, and links Grace too closely with meekness, abrogation and humility, rather than on awe and wonder.*

Repeatedly, Gajdusek traces his outlook to his mother. She taught him "love and tenderness"; her "romanticism" and "unreasonable concern for the spirit and soul" fed his questing nature and his passion for adventure. In 1963, expressing gratitude for her willingness to befriend Mbagintao, he likens her to her entomologist sister, "now bound for Kabul, Afghanistan!" adding, "A queer, proud, hopelessly egotistical and . . . truly 'existentialist' family of rogues! All values exist as we define them, all reality is dependent upon us, not we upon it!"

Even growing up, he scorned convention. He did not visit his father's grave, he recollects, so as not to "defile" his memory with "socialized mourning practices." Birthday and holiday observances he rejected as "lacking in true sincerity and contrary to my developing ideas of fierce individuality." Instead, he prized individual achievement. His mother read to him from the classics, and ever after, tales of "heroism, moral grandeur and excellence" would make his eyes well with tears, as hers did, and his spine tingle. This is the soil in which grew his disposition to exalt the gifted individual: "The artist or the genius in any endeavor," he wrote in 1960, "even in love or sensuality, can be pardoned many a sin and failure in my world." He came to see strong feeling as virtually a form of achievement. The drive "to live, to love, to sleep, to stir, to think, to dream, to ponder and to muse INTENSELY" was central to his personality.

Even this bare sketch of the diarist's views should suggest his kinship with Friedrich Nietzsche, who similarly honored the Greeks and glorified the superior, creative, autonomous individual unconstrained by social convention. Gajdusek recognizes a kindred spirit as he reads and rereads *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Genealogy of Morals* in New Guinea in 1965. He discusses these books with more excitement than any other.

Although he comments on these works' "portentous" German nationalism and intermittent lack of rigor, he transcribes passages showing "Nietzsche at his best." He is thrilled to find expressed here his own belief in the arbitrariness of scholars' "blind faith in 'truth'" and exclaims, "In early adolescence I was Nietzschean without knowing it!" The journal entry on *The Genealogy of Morals* ends: "This is what adolescents should be reared on . . . not biblical drivel! . . . I would only fully trust the religious man who had been bred on as much of Nietzsche as the Bible" (first ellipsis in the original).

One religious man who meets Gajdusek's test (though Nietzsche acknowledged indebtedness to him, not the other way around) is Dostoevsky. The diarist does not elaborate on his supreme affinity for the great Russian novelist, the only person whose picture he carries in his wallet; he simply asserts it, upon reading the short story "The Dream of a Queer Fellow" in 1961, noting, "In him I can accept deep religiousness."

If Gajdusek does not explain his reasons for accepting Christian faith in this instance, he does reveal why he rejects religion generally, and the starkest obstacle is his "pagan" understanding of sex.

This is one branch of human experience where the author of the journals is no relativist. He grieves that the New Guineans' conversion will denature their "proud, strange sexuality." He rebels at the missionaries' finding "sin" so abundant in the area of sex: "From a gourmet in a land of plenty," they will turn the native into "a starving mendicant." His anthropologist's objectivity—though equal to describing cus-

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toms of the most hair-raising brutality in cooly neutral terms—several times deserts him when the subject is sex, and he turns into a passionate polemicist.

Nor does Gajdusek, armchair philosopher, contemplate man's sexual nature in its entirety. He takes little interest in marriage, for example, or in girls. Although his ostensible subject in several long discourses is the sexuality of "children" and "adolescents," in fact it is boys alone who concern him. His highly personal, fervently advocated program is the homosexual liberation of boys, youths, and the adult men who choose to make them their partners.

Thus, in describing the practices of prepubertal children and adolescents, Gajdusek construes sex as belonging to the realm of play. Sex is a "playful game of fun and humor." In a kind of outburst in 1961 prompted by a scene of easy eroticism at a teenagers' nightclub in the Western Caroline Islands, he pours out a plea for early sexual activity unfettered by any taboo: "I would, at this moment, have every youth sleep with his sister, get seduced by his older brother and male teacher, practice with his male and female cousins, aunts, uncles and teacher and maid—anything!—only to know sex as fun and frivolity, as rhythm and passionate play—from the very onset of puberty. Yes, all this I have long approved of . . ."

Most extraordinary is a two-and-a-half-page "tirade" in 1960, again arguing furiously for the sexual liberation of children and adolescent males. It begins as a defense of his "savage" friends' morality. Childhood in eastern New Guinea, he writes,

> *is a period of condoned sex play, requiring only tactful secrecy. Heterosexuality is fully understood by small children and the accepted indulgence of pre-pubertal children of both sexes, but marriageable girls are more keenly protected in most Highland cultures than in our own. Thus, homosexuality among boys and men, although a subject of levity and shamed and censured publicly, is apparently universal and of no more concern to the individual than his excretory functions.*

The chief difference between the New Guineans and their Jewish, Christian, and Moslem counterparts, he contends, is that the latter are forced to pay lip service to a code they do not observe. This fills him with indignation. "How far have we slipped since the ancients?" he cries.

> *How much more stupid self-deception must our society practice? I am incensed, for I now know that my young patients of five to ten years, my adolescent patients, and the children I have known throughout the civilized world, are not different in drive and often in action than my youthful friends of Melanesia. I resent the burden of guilt, dishonesty, and insincerity under which they must grow in current day society. It is a degrading and crippling intellectual, physical, moral shame, a treason to human dignity, that they must deny their sex life, hide it, and rephrase it for themselves and others, into representations false to all mankind.*

In light of this startling vehemence, Gajdusek's ethnopediatric researches take on new meaning. Far from being a simple cataloguer of diversity in the area of sexual culture, he has something very serious to prove.

Earlier in the same passage, writing of "non-traumatic" childhood sexuality among Melanesians, he comments: "It is most important to document their extensive so-called 'perverse' childhood sexuality, without any apparent crippling effects to their adult procreative role or masculine or feminine status." By 1965, his study of the Kukukuku has convinced him that homosexual relations between their young boys and men not only are non-traumatic for the children, but are actually beneficial, good for the boys and good for their communities: Kuk men "enjoy" the sexual availability of the youngsters; delinquency is nonexistent; and "a colorful ceremonial life" is available for the boys to join in and for the women "to behold at a distance." He continues:

FAR FROM BEING A SIMPLE CATALOGUER OF DIVERSITY IN THE AREA OF SEXUAL CULTURE, HE HAS SOMETHING VERY SERIOUS TO PROVE.

> *The sensually precocious, sensuous and flirtatious youngsters seem to make quite loving fathers and attentive husbands, and it seems to enforce an observation that I have made over the years in the pediatric clinic and in life: i.e. youngsters sexually active in the homosexual sphere in our culture tend to become rapidly heterosexually active in late adolescence and to adjust very well to their later heterosexual role. This thesis of which I am now rather sure, is so at odds with all the acceptable legends of sex in our own culture that I have hesitated to iterate it, but ample clinical evidence supports it, and the question to ask is not what harm the early sexual experience does to later adjustment of youngsters, but whereas [sic] the great majority find it only valuable experience for life—as with young*

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chimps and macaques. Here among the Kuks I am slowly aware that the fathers are very solicitous fathers . . .

If there is a note almost of triumph in this climactic passage, it must nevertheless be qualified. For emphatic as the diarist's advocacy of his particular brand of sexual freedom is, he cannot lay to rest his fears about the cost.

Thus, another "thesis" that Gajdusek investigates is that sexual freedom is incompatible with intellectual and artistic achievement. That 1961 paean to incest, for example, ends this way:

> *Yes, all this I have long approved of, yet, I am fully aware that in such a permissive, unfrustrated, un-fettered setting, not academic proficiency, scientific curiosity, aesthetic activity, creative drive, nor sustained intellectual endeavor are provoked. The ascetic, prohibitory, monastic and inhibiting atmosphere alone seems to be required to creative intellectual application and endeavor. Oh, if this may not be true! Yet, I fear it is, in spite of the whimsical wishful thinking of 'progressive' educators.*

Such educators, he writes two years later, will rear ravishing Polynesians, not Shakespeares. Moreover, he fears that even the heights of passion cannot be attained in a "permissive atmosphere." The very intensity he craves is incompatible with too-easy gratification. After a day in Fiji in 1963 that was "beyond the wildest fancies of adolescent day-dreaming," he finds he longs for "the quiet frustrations of libraries and laboratories" and for "the sharpening of desire and the intensifying of perception and acuity of sensation" available only "in a world of sublimated form and function."

AT 31, HE CAN DISMISS A FRIEND'S WARNING ABOUT THE DECIVILIZING IMPLICATIONS OF NIHILISM; AT 53, HE STRIKES A DIFFERENT CHORD.

This ambivalence is present from the first journal to the last. It is never resolved. If anything, the diarist's appreciation for the life governed by inherited faith and discipline grows with time. At 31, he can dismiss a friend's warning about the anarchic and decivilizing implications of nihilism with a perfectly confident "I do not fear this." At 53, he strikes a different chord. He calls it "a defect" in himself to feel surprise that an intelligent man can be a fundamentalist Christian. And he adds, "In the long run, it is as unreasoning and stupid for rational empiricists, for modern scientists and agnostics to believe that all people . . . can live in peace and harmony, without a guideline of some faith or formalized moral and religious code. To trust to 'reason' and 'reasonableness' in human affairs could be the doom of mankind."

Gajdusek the intellectual does not finally choose between the path of sensual freedom and the path of purposeful discipline, instead making it his life's work to document "man's multiple possible natures." Nor does Gajdusek the man choose between sensuality and sublimation. Instead, he weaves them both—and the tension between them—into the very fabric of his life.

He lives literally in two worlds, dividing his time between the "libraries and laboratories" at NIH and the cherished landscapes of Melanesia. His is a life of continual partings and new beginnings. He likes his relationships vivid and brief and speculates that their intensity is due to their "wind-like fleetingness." Much as he prizes these unions, they leave behind an awareness of "inconstancy," as he retreats from the boys into his work or senses the jealousies created each time a younger set of favorites displaces the old. Over the years, he writes many times about his need to escape excessive involvement with others and especially "to avoid the old human relationships that would scrutinize, censure, judge, and attempt to interfere with the new."

This tension is an uncomfortable one, and the diarist is not convinced by his own "rationalizations"—a word he uses several times at many years' remove in the context of justifying his inconstancy. He calls "monstrous" his ability suddenly to "freeze" a loving relationship. In the last journal, he writes that everyone close to him finally learns that he "uses" people. He surrounds himself with co-workers who are also friends. "But," he goes on, "as the group of children and adults around me begin to deprive me of my privacy and my solitude, my blood pressure mounts, irritability gets almost pathological, and I would long since have had episodes of cardiac decompensation or a CVA if I did not 'escape.'" This "has always been a major problem."

In a man whose conscious mind loathes hypocrisy, this sense of being drawn in irreconcilable directions has an undermining effect, which he seems to accept as irreducible. In Kukukuku country in 1970, he contrasts his scholarly existence in America with the earthy spectacle before him in New Guinea, where one sees "life and human values and relations unmarred by technology, science, and civilized complexity as it really is. To be part of this is rewarding . . . ," he writes, "to escape it and come back to it in small but intense

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doses is like cheating, and I know that, on both sides of my life, I can be accused of fraud and unfair involvement. However, for all its rewards and disappointments, it is the course I have elected" (ellipsis in the original).

There is another dark thought that crops up in the early journals, one that seems out of character in a man so vital: He expects to have a short life. On his 34th birthday, he notes that he never thought he would live past 30. Six years later, he contemplates "a lonely and isolated decade ahead—should I live into it." Halfway between, in 1960, he has a premonition of trouble: "How do I warrant all this privilege—to live with children of all the globe, intensely and closely everywhere—and to drink as a God the ambrosia of this world? Such a privileged three and a half decades must presage a most dismal future."

AP

Gajdusek is led to a sherriff's car following his April 4 arrest.

The Dismal Present

Now, so many years later, trouble is at hand. What the diaries show about the man who wrote them decades ago cannot prove or disprove the present charges against him. Clearly, however, they bolster the credibility of those charges.

It seems inescapably plain that the author of the journals was a homosexual pedophile. Travel allowed him to evade the social barriers to gratifying his forbidden taste, just as nihilism freed his conscience. The hope of proving that love such as his is, in fact, not harmful to those whom society calls its victims but actually beneficial was a central motivation of his work.

It should be noted, too, that the journals corroborate the story of Gajdusek's accusers in at least two particulars. One is the sex act in question. Gajdusek is accused of fondling and performing fellatio, not of sodomy; the journals suggest he was interested in the former activities but rarely mention the latter. And the older youth told the *Washington Post* that during an argument, Gajdusek slapped him. At least three times, over many years, the diarist records striking his boys.

During the decades of the journals, Gajdusek constructed a life of moral ambiguity. A Western man living as a guest in primitive villages, a scientist merely observing what is, he had grounds for adapting to local customs and suspending judgment. These ambiguities he transplanted to Maryland, as he built his family of adopted Melanesians and Micronesians.

In the end, though, the crimes he stands accused of are not ambiguous. Adults' sexual exploitation of children in their care is abhorrent, whether the adults be priests or scout masters or adoptive fathers. There is no moral standard by which it is otherwise. Even the brazen advocates of pedophilia, with their talk of "ASCs" (adults who are sexual with children) and their enthusiasm for the mentoring benefits of "Greek love," do not sanction an adult's forcing himself on a young dependent, as Gajdusek is accused of doing. At the time of the alleged incidents, Gajdusek was in his 60s and 70s, and the boys—no Stone Age Kukukukus, but natives of Micronesian islands Christianized in the last century—were 10,000 miles from home.

If Gajdusek is guilty, his story must hold special bitterness for those who believe that individuals of intelligence and goodwill can and should devise their own morality by the light of their own reason, that they will know how to set proper limits for themselves and channel their energies to worthy ends, while doing their neighbor no harm. ♦

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Clinton's Good Press and the Mono-partisan Media

By Michael Barone

The heart seems to have gone out of the defenders of the mainline media against charges of leftward bias. Where it was formerly asserted with vigor that the great organs of print and broadcast press were pictures of objectivity, now it is conceded that journalism just seems to attract people who lean one way politically, and anyway that the press's natural emphasis of bad over good news means it will be critical of a society in which the Right supposedly occupies most of the seats of power. But none of this is said with much assurance or pride.

The spirit of the defenders of mainline media objectivity was broken, I think, by the publication last year of a survey of 136 Washington reporters and bureau chiefs. Eighty-nine percent of them said they had voted for Bill Clinton in 1992. Not much effort was made to debunk this sample as unrepresentative, since to anyone with any close acquaintance with the Washington press corps, it rings true. Now, 89 percent is a very high number; outside of all-black neighborhoods and a few high-income enclaves, it is very hard to find an election precinct in the United States that votes 89 percent for any one candidate. Nor can it be doubted that the mono-partisanship of the press makes a difference. Just ask the question: Would the coverage by an 89 percent pro-Bush media be different from the coverage of an 89 percent pro-Clinton media? Or the coverage of a media divided, as the voters usually are, pretty evenly between the two parties? The answer is: of course.

THE INTERESTING QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER THERE IS MEDIA BIAS—THAT MUCH HAS BEEN SETTLED—BUT HOW IT OPERATES AND WHETHER IT HARMS THE PUBLIC.

The interesting question is not whether there is media bias, but *how* it operates, and whether it harms the public—or the media themselves. For media bias seldom manifests itself as crude propagandizing. Far more often, it is a matter of reporters and producers looking for a story where they expect to find it and not looking where they don't. One result is that the media consistently tear down some figures on the right (Newt Gingrich got 100 percent negative coverage on the three old-line TV networks in the run-up to the 1994 election) but not on the left.

Consider our two most recent vice presidents. Dan Quayle was pilloried in network newscasts and on front pages when he mangled the United Negro College Fund's slogan and misspelled "potato," but Al Gore received almost no notice when he translated the national motto *e pluribus unum* as "from one, many," or when he said that one of the presidents he most admired was James Knox. And if Quayle had spoken anguishedly about a sister's death from lung cancer even though he had campaigned years later as a proud tobacco farmer, would the mainline press not have called for a Nexis search and presented the quotes immediately, as THE WEEKLY STANDARD's daily convention issue and the *Washington Times* did?

Media bias is especially strong on cultural issues. While most Americans are believing Christians, most people in the mainline media are not, and overwhelmingly they are pro-feminist and pro-choice on abortion. Hence the breathtakingly one-sided coverage of Anita Hill's charges against Clarence Thomas (the media reported over and over that "women" were outraged by Hill's charges even as their own polls showed that most women believed Thomas) and the near-total refusal of mainline media to provide descriptions of partial-birth abortions (because an accurate description leaves most people repelled). Hence the top editors' eyes at the *Washington Post* simply glazed over when a reporter's copy asserted, without attribution, that most followers of the religious Right are relatively poor, uneducated, and easy to command (it turns out, they're not). Hence the national media found it worthy of comment (which it arguably was) that Bob Dole declined to appear before the

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NAACP—but not that Bill Clinton declined to appear before the Christian Coalition.

But what of the press's treatment of Bill Clinton? Clinton staffers and backers argue loudly that the press has been harshly and unfairly critical of Clinton. But a review of the record shows the press tends to cut Clinton slack it never cut George Bush or Ronald Reagan.

Take Clinton's October 1995 statement in Houston that he had raised taxes too much in 1993. Here was the president criticizing the most important policy of his first year, one for which many Democrats went down to defeat in 1994, but it took three days for it to find its way into the *Washington Post* or *New York Times*. It ran immediately on the Reuters wire and was highlighted in the *Washington Times*, whose editor "instantly thought it was a great story." Even then the *Post* and the *Times* ignored it for another day—as they certainly (and correctly) did not ignore George Bush's 1990 reversal of his "read my lips, no new taxes" promise.

Sean Delonas

This is pretty much standard operating procedure in the mainline press: little or no truth-squadding of Clinton statements, little or no scrutiny of inconsistencies and policy switches. It just doesn't seem to occur to a monopartisan press that there could be stories here.

As for media scandal-mongering, start with the original Whitewater story. It was broken in March 1992 by Jeff Gerth in the *New York Times* but abandoned by just about everyone when the Clinton campaign presented an exonerating report written by a Clinton pal. Or recall the *Washington Post*'s hesitancy to run the story of Clinton's abusing his office by using Arkansas state troopers to procure women—a hesitancy that reached the point of fisticuffs between an editor who didn't want to run the story and a reporter who did. The *Post* finally ran it only after the *American Spectator* did. Similarly, new revelations are treated as "nothing new," scandal stories are dropped after one day, and the motives of Clinton's congressional supporters on scandals are not scrutinized. This is not exactly the way the press covered Watergate.

Or consider the mainline press's coverage of the Clinton White House's FBI files. These had been concealed for years and were only revealed when they were produced in response to a House-committee subpoena. The first story, that the White House had requested the FBI file of former White House travel office head Billy Dale almost a year after he had been fired, made page A-4 of the *Washington Post* and A-24 of the *New York Times*. The even more explosive story that the Clinton White House had obtained hundreds of FBI files of former Bush administration officials, made page A-8 of the June 8 *New York Times*, which even led with a White House official's statement that the request was "an innocent mistake"! Only as the count of FBI files reached past 300 to 900, and the administration's explanations of how they had been innocently obtained became totally implausible, did the FBI files make the front page of the *Times*.

So it has gone these past few weeks, in the heart of the campaign season. The FDIC inspector general issues a report saying Hillary Rodham Clinton prepared a document used to "deceive" federal regulators: It makes the front page of the *Washington Post* and *Washington Times* but is played up little elsewhere, and except for conservative outlets dropped after a day. This is not how a similar revelation about a Republican would have been played during the "decade of greed."

Bill Clinton in an interview with Jim Lehrer dan-

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gles a pardon in front of Whitewater defendants even as he makes the preposterous charge that Kenneth Starr is trying to force Susan McDougal to lie (preposterous because if she merely repeats her trial testimony she gets out of jail): The attack on Starr is given some uncritical play but the pardon ploy is mostly ignored, except by conservatives like William Safire. (It will be interesting to see whether reporters press Clinton to commit to making no pardons.)

The Senate Judiciary Committee reveals there is a six-month gap in the log of the White House's FBI files: A-10 in the *Washington Post*, no mention at all in a B-13 story on the subject in the *New York Times*. Not exactly the way the 18-and-a-half-minute gap in the White House tapes was treated. On scandal, as on policy issues, there is what Robert Samuelson in the *Washington Post* described as "an imbalance in election press coverage. Bob Dole's dubious claims have been examined closely and properly so," Samuelson continued. "But Clinton's deceptions have been largely ignored."

All of which is quite astonishing. It is inconceivable that a story that a Republican White House had improperly obtained hundreds of FBI files on its political enemies would not have immediately made the front pages of leading papers, quite possibly with screaming headlines. And it is a matter of record that mainline media now treat current congressional investigations as partisan Republican enterprises, even though they treated 1980s investigations run by Democrats as official and congressional.

PEOPLE IN THE MAINLINE MEDIA HAVE A LESS THAN HEARTY APPETITE FOR STORIES OF SCANDAL IN AN ADMINISTRATION FOR WHICH 89 PERCENT OF THEM VOTED.

People in the mainline media, remembering Watergate and Iran-contra, are exquisitely alert to the possibility of scandal in, and violations of civil liberties by, a Republican administration, but they evidently consider such developments so unlikely in a Democratic administration that they reflexively ignore or downplay any evidence of them. So, without necessarily any conscious partisan intention, they have a far less hearty appetite for stories of scandal in this administration, for which 89 percent of them voted, than they did in administrations that a similar percentage of them voted against.

As the Clinton administration, for all its complaints about scandal coverage, knows. Last spring, when Gary Aldrich's *Unlimited Access* came out, the *New York Post*'s Deborah Orin asked White House press secretary Mike McCurry questions about the White House's hiring of staffers with recent drug problems. McCurry responded in high dudgeon—the standard Clinton-team response to suggestions that this president or this administration is not completely pure—and "challenged anyone else to ask the question, and no one would," says Orin. Or as *USA Today*'s Richard Benedetto noted after watching the White House press corps follow Clinton through six states in four days: "What was eyebrow-raising was that at no time did this reputedly tough band of politically savvy writers clamor for the president to present himself." Even Sam Donaldson, who returned to covering the White House for a week in September, was amazed at how docile the reporters are around Clinton.

Has mainline media bias been getting worse? My sense is that it has. Newsroom cultures are becoming mono-partisan partly because of quota hiring and partly because people who don't toe the liberal line have the impression they wouldn't be happy there. And on at least some issues—notably abortion—journalists are increasingly unapologetic or even proud of their partisanship.

But the increase in bias is likely to make the media less effective over time. People are not always fooled. Half a century ago, when most media leaned Republican, Americans voted five times for Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman; over the last 30 years, as the mainline media have leaned farther and farther left, Americans have voted Republican for president five out of seven times. Already there are clear signs that millions of Americans are fleeing from the mainline media as Germans once fled East Berlin. Newspaper circulation has fallen from 62 million in 1970 to 60 million in 1994, even as households increased from 63 million to 97 million. Network-newscast viewership peaked at 41 percent of households in 1980-81 and has fallen to 28 percent in 1994-95. Changes in lifestyle (two-worker families) and technology (50-channel cable) account for some of this change, but not all, for much of the flight has been to media that are antique: Rush Limbaugh broadcasts on AM radio, which started in 1920, and Newt Gingrich reaches his admirers with books, a medium that dates from 1456. Media bias may be making it marginally harder for Republicans to beat Bill Clinton and hold Congress this year, but over time its real victims are likely not to be conservative politicians but the mono-partisan media themselves. ♦

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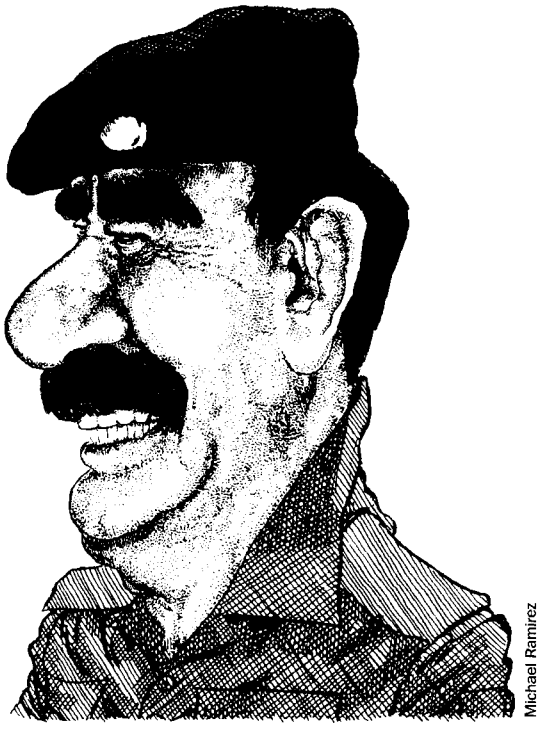
Bill Clinton's Bay of Pigs

By Michael Ledeen

America's behavior in Iraq over the past month "bears a close resemblance to the disaster of the Bay of Pigs, but unlike President Kennedy, no one is apologizing for this one." So said former Defense Department official Paul Wolfowitz before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As in 1961, brave men prepared to risk their lives in common cause with the United States have been abandoned to a tyrant's murderous pleasures. And, as in 1961, our friends and enemies around the world will draw very dangerous conclusions from the event.

Saddam Hussein's Aug. 30-31 invasion of the American-guaranteed safe zone in northern Iraq was no surprise. All the interested parties—the American and British governments, the two Kurdish clans, and the only effective Iraqi opposition to Saddam, the Iraqi National Congress—had discussed it. The Americans in contact with the Kurds and Shiites had promised a speedy and forceful response to the invasion.



Michael Ramirez

Moreover, despite numerous reports to the contrary, the U.S. was not surprised when one group of Kurds—the "Barzani Kurds"—made a tactical alliance with Saddam to support the elite Iraqi military forces, the Republican Guard. "It wasn't," one CIA veteran told me, "a tough intelligence mission." The Republican Guard staged an armored attack not only against the rival "Talabani Kurds" but also against the headquarters of the Iraqi National Congress—killing many, kidnapping others, and grabbing files and computers containing lists of contacts elsewhere in Iraq. We've known the Kurds for decades, and despite our periodic betrayals of them (first under Nixon/Kissinger at the Shah's request, then under Bush/Baker), we generally know what they're up to. We had known for weeks that Barzani's treachery was in the works, and we knew within hours that the deal had been cut.

So there was not, as the Clintonite leaks would have it, an "intelligence failure." No, Saddam's entry into the Kurdish zone was a policy debacle, pure and simple. The Kurds and the Iraqi National Congress asked us for protection against the impending invasion, and we reassured them: If the Iraqis moved into the zone, we said, there would be terrible consequences.

Then we watched. We watched Saddam assemble his armored column, composed of virtually every operational tank in Iraq, more than 300 in all. And we watched him advance slowly northward, and we sent him warnings of dire consequences. We had plenty of time to send attacking planes from bases in Turkey or from carriers. In open country, with none of the problems of weather and terrain that make operations in Bosnia so difficult and dangerous, the Iraqi tanks were sitting ducks for our fighter-bombers. Hitting those tanks would have been a real blow to Saddam, would have given a much-needed morale boost to his opponents, and would have made it clear to everyone in the region that the United States was serious about defending its friends and advancing its interests.

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Instead, Bill Clinton told his foreign-policy people that his top priority was to avoid American casualties of any sort: No body bags delivered to weeping families back home, no planes shot down over hostile territory, no hostages dragged behind jeeps through dusty streets. Therefore no risk, and therefore no serious action.

The cruise missiles belatedly lobbed into radar and antiaircraft bases in southern Iraq neatly demonstrated the president's obsession with keeping Americans out of harm's way, and its fatal consequences. Freedom fighters died instead of storm troopers, and, as even CIA director John Deutch bravely admitted to Congress, Saddam is now much stronger and we much weaker than before the Iraqi blitz.

How could it be otherwise? Potential friends and allies have seen that the brave Iraqis foolish enough to believe that the United States was serious about fighting Saddam Hussein have been abandoned to the Butcher of Baghdad.

THE CRUISE MISSILES BELATEDLY LOBBED INTO RADAR AND ANTIAIRCRAFT BASES NEATLY DEMONSTRATED THE PRESIDENT'S OBSESSION WITH KEEPING AMERICANS OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

Some of Clinton's defenders have tried to pretend that U.S. prestige and credibility were not involved since Saddam had merely intervened in an internal Kurdish conflict after being invited in by one of the contending sides. Too bad for the losing Kurds, they say, but it wasn't really our problem; we were just enforcing our no-fly zone, and we taught Saddam a lesson by extending it further south, and to make the point, we punished him with our Tomahawks.

This sort of nonsense comes only from people so cynical they believe they can always rewrite history according to the political needs of the hour. The Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq is our creation and our responsibility. Having decided not to drive the Gulf War to its logical conclusion—the destruction of Saddam's tyranny—George Bush and James Baker called upon the oppressed peoples of Iraq to do the deed for us. Kurds and Shiites attacked in the weeks after the U.S. declared an end to the war with Iraq, only to be slaughtered by Saddam's remaining forces as Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf lamented that he'd been tricked. When they were on the verge of obliteration, the Kurds were saved when we imposed a safe haven with the irresistible force of Allied air power.

Saddam was told to stay out of the Kurdish area, under penalty of savage reprisals. The whole point of establishing a no-fly zone was the protection of the area from Baghdad. It was a conscience balm for an administration that had led Kurds and Iraqis to be massacred. Clinton continued the policy, from time to time announcing the firmness of our resolve to "contain Saddam."

Like all Rube Goldberg devices, the Kurdish area has worked poorly at best. Although created to provide sanctuary for Saddam's enemies, it has been subject to the same punishing economic sanctions as the rest of the country. And while Saddam has managed to get his hands on revenues from oil sales—legal and not—Kurdistan has no marketable commodities. The Kurdish clans and Shiite opposition have received some money from us, a bit from the British, and the rest by imposing customs duties on smugglers to and from Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. They have also been the dubious beneficiaries of advice, and the pretense of support, from the various low-level State and CIA types who have come down through Turkey.

The conventional wisdom at State and CIA is that the Kurds are tougher than the Iraqis, and if you want to get rid of Saddam, the Kurds are the best bet. The Kurds are certainly tenacious survivors in a mean neighborhood, but if you want to work with such types, you'd better know what you want and be prepared to fight alongside them. We have failed in both, and lacking any coherent guidance from Washington, the Kurds reverted to their age-old pastime of fighting among themselves.

This intensified in 1994 and 1995 when the "smuggling taxes" dwindled, as did the handouts from Washington and London. Indeed, the only group in Kurdistan that showed internal unity and a proper sense of mission—the removal of the Baghdad regime—was not Kurdish at all, but Shiite. I refer to the Iraqi National Congress, which repeatedly intervened to separate the warring Kurdish factions and last year delivered serious military blows to the Iraqi army. In keeping with the folly of their enterprise, the Clinton people praised the Iraqi National Congress for pacifying the Kurds, but repeatedly warned against taking the struggle to Saddam.

One of the reasons for Washington's reluctance to support the Iraqi National Congress's anti-Saddam campaign was that our Saudi allies have an allergy to successful Shiite movements, since they fear assaults from radical Shiites against the Saudi monarchy (the

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Saudis follow Wahaabi Islam). They preferred to let the Iraqi National Congress cool its heels in the north, while political and economic support was given to a lackluster collection of Iraqi military defectors and various political types who formed the "National Accord" based in the Jordanian capital, Amman. The "Accord" was a joke; it was penetrated from the beginning by Iraqi agents, and its followers and sympathizers inside Iraq were rounded up some weeks before the invasion of the Kurdish area.

Meanwhile, Clinton and Christopher instructed our diplomats and intelligence officers to devote their energies to having the Iraqi National Congress broker and monitor peace among the Kurds, but as usual, spin triumphed over substance. The Iraqi National Congress—whose talented leader, Ahmad Chalabi, holds a Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Chicago—managed to separate the Kurdish fighters in the summer, and Clinton's envoys asked the Congress to provide a "peacekeeping" force to monitor the ceasefire line.

Chalabi responded as he had for more than a year, reminding Washington that such efforts would require money and military supplies. The Iraqi National Congress would need about $4 million to do the job. The Americans on the scene agreed and promised the money, but for many months they brought only more promises, not the funding. Finally, a high-level meeting was convened at the American Embassy in London at the end of August between Kurdish leaders, Chalabi, British and American diplomats, and Turkish officials. On August 30, they reached general agreement on a continuation of the ceasefire, terms of reference for a Chalabi-led peacekeeping force, and future talks to institutionalize the arrangements. In the midst of the negotiations, Chalabi was called to the phone, where his people on the ground informed him that the Iraqi invasion was beginning. He passed on the information, and the talks were abruptly terminated.

The Jordanians, who recently supported a tough anti-Saddam line, are now openly calling for the United States to reach a modus vivendi with him. The Turks—who had made it clear they were ready to let us use their military airfields to stage a serious attack against the Iraqi invaders—now speak contemptuously of our regional policies. The Kuwaitis—who, along with the Saudis, bear the financial costs of all our military operations with regard to Iraq—let us send soldiers only when we had announced there was no intention to use them directly against Saddam. The Clinton administration is claiming that the Barzani-led Kurds—the ones who invited Saddam to invade—are now coming to us for assistance, but the truth is that they have issued an ultimatum to us: Either provide real support or leave us alone. And thus matters stand.

America's humiliation at the Bay of Pigs encouraged Castro and his Soviet backers to install missiles in Cuba, bringing international tensions to their highest point in decades. There is, blessedly, no Soviet empire to exploit Clinton's humiliation in Iraq, and our risk is not nearly so grave as it was 35 years ago. But there will be a price to pay. We can be sure that the wicked sponsors of anti-Western terrorism are even now preparing their next assaults, and we can be equally certain that we will find fewer brave men and women prepared to warn us, and to help us thwart these evil designs. ♦

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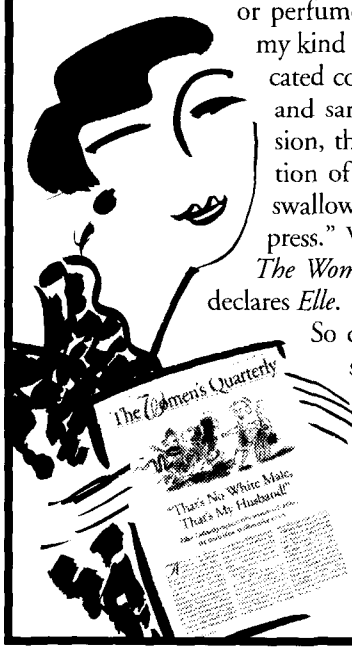

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When Moral Agency Disappears

By Alan Ehrenhalt

Picture in your mind urban America at its most frightening, somewhere in Bedford-Stuyvesant or North St. Louis or the West Side of Chicago: open-air drug markets flourishing in the daytime, 30-year-old single grandmothers who have never worked, teenagers with AK-47s ready to use them in a fight over a pair of shoes.

If you are at all human, you can't help asking a few simple questions: How on earth did we arrive at this pass? None of these neighborhoods was like this a generation ago. Most of the people who lived there were poor, but they held jobs, married, and raised families. The streets, by and large, were safe. All of that has unraveled. Whose fault is it? And what can be done?

There are two simple answers. One is that the characters in this urban nightmare are victims of residual racism, trapped in misery by a white society that has deluded itself into thinking discrimination no longer exists. The other is that the squandered lives of the inner city are the plain fault of those who squander them, moral agents in a free society who lack the character and personal responsibility to conduct themselves in civilized fashion.

These are clear answers; they are also utterly incompatible. And they are pretty good microcosms of the larger ideological divisions in present-day American life. If you know what side somebody chooses to take on Who Lost Bedford-Stuyvesant? the odds are you know what he thinks about a whole range of political and moral issues.

William Julius Wilson, who has been studying the inner city for the past 30 years, takes neither side. In Wilson's view, the residents of America's most dysfunctional neighborhoods are victims neither of racism nor of their own moral failure. They are victims of economics. During the past generation, Wilson argues, the manufacturing jobs that provided the anchor to inner-city life have simply dried up: gone to the suburbs, or to the Arizona desert, or to Sri Lanka. In the 1990s, he argues, the honest work that once served to support struggling urban families in fragile respectability cannot be found. And all the pathology of the streets—drugs, crime, teenage pregnancy—flows from that one inescapable truth.

When Work Disappears, Wilson says in his new book by that name (Knopf, 322 pages, $26), middle-class residents pack up and leave the community. With few working adults, stores go out of business. Apartment buildings are abandoned, and banks refuse to lend money for renovation. Churches lose parishioners, and the civic organizations that once provided social control cease to function. Teenagers who see no hope for the future opt for the short-term satisfactions of sex and crack, and the consolations of juvenile motherhood. It is a vicious and familiar cycle. But it isn't a function of racism, in Wilson's view, and it isn't a function of individual weakness. It's a function of jobs.

Leon Dash does not explain things quite that way. He considers the residents of the ghetto to be victims more of caste than of global economics. But he shares Wilson's determined refusal to ascribe the problem to either current racial prejudice or individual moral failure. For Dash, as for Wilson, the true culprit is a larger historical force beyond the control of any individual in society, black or white.

Dash's book, *Rosa Lee* (Basic Books, 279 pages, $23), is the microcosmic companion to Wilson's volume of surveys, statistics, and generalizations. Based on the *Washington Post* series that won Dash a Pulitzer prize in 1994, it is the biography of Rosa Lee Cunningham, a lifelong resident of Washington, D.C., who has spent her entire adult life far outside the borders of respectability, and far from what virtually any human being—including Rosa Lee—would consider a decent existence.

Rosa Lee became a common thief at the age of 10, a middle-school dropout at 13, a single mother at 14, and a single grandmother at 29. Dash met her in 1988 in the D.C. jail, where she was incarcerated for the twelfth time, in this case for selling heroin. For most of her adult life, she had been a prostitute or a heroin addict or both, and she had taught virtually all her habits to her eight children, six of whom had never held down a job for any significant length of time.

Rosa Lee is the most powerful piece of reporting on modern ghetto life I have ever read. It takes the reader not only inside the physical world of Rosa Lee, the world of rat-

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infested apartments, crack houses, and endless visits to D.C. criminal court, but inside the minds of the inhabitants, so far as any middle-class reader, black or white, is ever likely to penetrate. It is difficult to complete this book without feeling deep despair, and yet it is almost impossible not to continue to the end.

Dash is a reporter, not a sociologist. And yet, like any intelligent reader, he feels compelled to ask the elemental question: How did this happen? Rosa Lee's parents were poor people, sharecroppers up from North Carolina, but they didn't live this way. They worked all their lives, and they stayed out of trouble.

In an effort to explain the enormity of Rosa Lee's plight, Dash dips into the work of Gunnar Myrdal in the 1940s and into the concept of caste. It's not that opportunity doesn't exist in a city like Washington for Rosa Lee and her people (he readily concedes that it does), it's that everything in her personal and family history—the feudal power structure of rural 1920s North Carolina, the rigid segregation of Depression-era Washington, D.C., the absence of any appreciation for learning on her parents' part—all combined to make her less than a moral free agent.

"It is obvious to me," Dash writes on his last page, "that what happened to Rosa Lee, and continues with three generations of her direct descendants, is tied much more strongly to the low class and caste level to which her family was relegated before she was born than to her many admittedly bad choices."

But just how obvious is it? Perhaps the most powerful argument Dash presents in favor of his caste theory is the fact that six of her eight children are living the same squalid life she lives. All six use hard drugs; all six have been in jail. Only two sons, Alvin and Eric, a D.C. bus driver and a National Park Service employee, have managed to fashion stable and productive lives. Dash believes they are merely the exceptions that prove the rule. The rule is that the burdens of caste and class are simply too much for the average ghetto resident to overcome.

But this whole line of argument is challenged by another piece of information Dash does not give us until the last few pages of the book, and even then he presents it in a peculiarly offhanded way. The success of Alvin and Eric, Dash says, is "a testament to what can be achieved under the most dire circumstances. So are eight of Rosa Lee's ten brothers and sisters, who moved from poverty into the working and middle classes."

Kent Lemon

William Julius Wilson

Could that be true? Eight out of ten? Apparently it is true, because Dash repeats it, although he gives next to no information about where all these siblings are or what they are doing. But it is pretty clear that if, among Rosa Lee's children, the norm is imprisonment, virtual and literal, then among her many siblings the norm was escape. Rosa Lee was the exception.

This in no way minimizes the difficulties these siblings faced in the Washington, D.C., of the 1940s and 1950s, marked as it was not only by racial prejudice but by formal segregation. All of Rosa Lee's brothers and sisters were confronted with the temptation to make a series of foolish choices that precluded their rising into the middle class. Rosa Lee made every one of them. Obviously, these temptations were much harder to avoid in the slums of inner-city Washington than they would have been in the neighboring suburbs of Maryland or Virginia. But the ability of Rosa Lee's eight siblings to avoid these traps suggests that it is reasonable to treat her own life as a sequence of genuine choices—and to portray her six failed children as products not merely of ghetto conditions but of life with a mother who had rejected stability and chosen degradation.

Dash does not see it this way, and neither does William Julius Wilson, whom he brings in from time to time to comment on the story. Wilson says he is "not at all" surprised by Rosa Lee and her family. He says that this is "what happens when you have people who live in these kinds of neighborhoods."

As a statement of literal fact, this is unassailable. These things happen all the time in the D.C. ghetto of Anacostia, and they don't happen very often in the wealthy suburb of Chevy Chase. But does that allow us to relieve the inner-city inhabitants of all responsibility as individual moral agents—as choosers—and label them as the virtually helpless victims of a global economic order?

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I don't think so. Consider teenage pregnancy, the most important issue in this entire debate. Rosa Lee became pregnant at 13, and by age 20 she was a single mother with six children by four different men. It isn't too big a stretch of the imagination to view all of her subsequent problems as consequences of that first pregnancy. If she had not become pregnant, she might perhaps have had a chance at a stable life, even as a sixth-grade dropout. Once she was pregnant, that slim chance was pretty much gone.

But in what way was that decision a product of economic circumstance? For one thing, it was made in 1949, long before, in Wilson's terms, work in the ghetto began to "disappear." In those immediate postwar years, in Washington as in all large American cities, industrial jobs for black people were more plentiful than they had been before the war or would be a generation later. It is perhaps plausible to argue, as Wilson does, that teenage girls in the ghetto have babies these days because they realize there are no decent jobs for fathers and thus no opportunity for a conventional family life. But this is not the situation Rosa Lee Cunningham confronted nearly 50 years ago when she had her first baby and set all the tragic events of Dash's story in motion.

Segregation or no segregation, ghetto or no ghetto, I think it makes sense to treat a pregnancy such as Rosa Lee's first one in 1949 as an act of individual choice. What is more, most of the ghetto would treat it that way as well.

In painting his portrait of inner-city Chicago, Wilson draws upon mounds of statistics, survey data, and personal interviews. The interviews are quite revealing. "The project don't make nobody," a 28-year-old welfare mother tells her interviewer, "you make yourself. Now, if you want to get out there and carry that project name, be tough and rowdy and sloppy, disrespectful, well, shoot, that's lowlife." A 33-year-old unemployed woman, living in a public housing project in which a majority of the residents are not only unemployed but destitute, makes exactly the same point. "I think that everybody has a chance to get ahead," she says, "but it's all where your mind's at."

Wilson offers this testimony to make the argument that ghetto values are much closer to middle-class values than most of the middle-class thinks. What he succeeds in proving is that they are closer to middle-class values than Wilson's own. The residents of the ghetto, unlike Wilson himself, tend to treat one another as free agents and hold themselves responsible for the decisions they make in life, regardless of the vicissitudes of the global economy. Wilson, for all his sophistication in analyzing the urban predicament, refuses to make the simple assumption of moral agency that his subjects make almost as a matter of course.

Wilson avoids the trap of regarding ghetto residents simply as victims of racial discrimination. In so doing, however, he comes close to writing them off as significant actors of any sort. The book's title itself says a great deal. "Work" is what has disappeared—not initiative or discipline or character. "Work" is the protagonist. Wilson avoids calling people victims only to re-label them as economic pawns.

But even the reader who is sympathetic to Wilson's arguments about urban deindustrialization—and I am one—can't help reflecting that the disappearance of work is more than simply an economic problem. Why does Citibank, a New York City institution, handle its credit card processing in Sioux Falls rather than Brownsville or the South Bronx? State tax rates undoubtedly have something to do with it: Doing business is cheaper in South Dakota than anywhere in New York state. But the values of the work force have even more to do with it, as I think Wilson would concede. If the South Bronx were a safe place with a literate and disciplined work force, employers would be returning there right now.

According to Wilson's survey data, 74 percent of white employers in Chicago expressed negative feelings about the character and discipline of ghetto workers and ghetto job applicants. Ninety percent of black employers expressed the same feelings. "It's an attitude problem," one of the black employers said. "That's all I can tell you."

In other words, it is a circle. Jobs leave the inner city, and the residents become demoralized, in every sense of the word. Under those conditions, jobs do not return, no matter how many people in the community are unemployed and say they want to work. Is it economics or is it culture? The question hardly matters. It is both.

It would be unfair to accuse Wilson of not understanding this. For the most part, he understands it perfectly well. It is only the ultimate leap, from cultural analysis to moral judgment, that he is stubbornly unwilling to make.

As a result, the laundry list of policy solutions he offers in the concluding chapter of his book is a collection of tasks for governments to perform, not a call to moral renewal on an individual scale. He calls for national school performance standards, a federal school-to-work transition program, resumption of federal revenue sharing with local governments, regional mass transit to take inner-city residents to suburban jobs, universal health care, and a massive expansion of Head Start into a fully subsidized preschool program covering virtually all of the children in the country.

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Training for the chronically unemployed would take place at a network of centers distributed at convenient inner-city sites, designed to "make persons who have been persistently unemployed or out of the labor force 'job ready,' so that a prospective employer would be assured that a worker understands and appreciates employers' expectations such as showing up for work on time, and on a regular basis, accepting the orders of supervisors, etc."

There is no denying that programs such as these would help a significant number of people; all poverty programs help somebody. But could they help more than a tiny fraction of the 150,000 residents of Chicago public housing projects, many of whom long ago lost any real contact with the values and disciplines of working life? Could they help Rosa Lee Cunningham and her children, who among them have spent more than a century making their living only from the combined proceeds of drugs, prostitution, larceny, and welfare?

What would help these people? The beginning of wisdom, it seems to me, is to say that nobody knows. But in the absence of good ideas, it seems a serious failing to leave out, as Wilson does, any prospect of an inner-city moral revival, religious or otherwise, that would spread the simple message of Wilson's respondent: "The project don't make you, you make yourself."

To return to the notion of ghetto residents as free actors is not to deny the truth of much of what Wilson says about how the ghetto got this way. Yes, the disappearance of jobs has something to do with it. Yes, the historical legacy of groundless discrimination in northern cities like Chicago remains a factor. Yes, Dash is right, the caste mentality imposed on rural African Americans in the old sharecropper South is still an obstacle.

But knowing the roots of a problem doesn't necessarily point the way out. Of all the organizations swirling around present-day ghetto politics, the Nation of Islam is the one that seems to understand this. It is the world champion when it comes to ascribing the plight of the ghetto to evil outside forces—greedy Jews, racist white governments, genocidal plots that wind their way implausibly back to the slave trade of the 1700s. But for all the preposterous rhetoric, the black Muslims don't preach that dwelling on the origins of squalor is the best way to return communities to health. They preach that even under the worst circumstances, residents of the ghetto remain free moral agents—even 13-year-old girls tempted to pregnancy, even parolees thrust back onto the drug-infested streets where they first got in trouble. It isn't easy to straighten out in those circumstances, but it is possible. So the Muslims say, and for all that is offensive about them, they have turned around more lives in the last generation than all the federal community-action programs put together.

It isn't very comfortable or satisfying to reduce the problems of the ghetto to individual moral choice, and in many cases, as Wilson and Dash point out, anyone who seeks to make such a case inevitably runs

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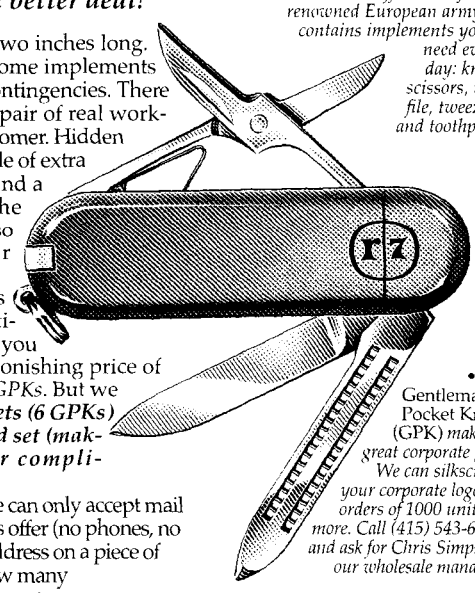

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up against the heavy baggage of historical injustice. And yet in treating people, even the most degraded people, with the respect due them as free moral agents, one can at least see a glimmer of hope somewhere down the line. Proposals based on massive government intervention don't offer even that.

In the end, what can one say about the notion of moral responsibility in the ghetto? Perhaps something akin to what Churchill said about democracy: It is the least likely answer, except for all the answers that have been tried. ♦

Music

A Great, Unknown Conductor

By Jay Nordlinger

When Russia was swallowed in communism, musical life was shackled to the state. Some got out, like Sergei Rachmaninoff. Some stayed and suffered, like Dmitri Shostakovich. Some chose to become functionaries of the regime, like Dmitri Kabalevsky (also a composer). But most were neither dissidents nor lackeys, neither collaborators nor saints. Instead, they did what was necessary to fulfill their musical destinies in the trying circumstances of a police state. And in this group were some of the titans of the age, among them the conductor Yevgeny Mravinsky.

Who? The question is pardonable, for Mravinsky is probably the least known of the great conductors. His life had the misfortune to coincide almost exactly with that of the Soviet Union: He was born in 1908; he died in 1988. For 50 of those years, he directed the Leningrad Philharmonic, in the longest association of conductor and orchestra in history. (Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra are in second place, at 42 years.) Mravinsky traveled little in the West, and his recordings were few and obscure. How can we be certain of his greatness?

The answer is to be found in two revelatory box sets of Mravinsky's work, released by BMG Classics. BMG won the distribution rights to the archives of Melodiya, the old Soviet recording agency (still owned by the Russian government) rumored to house the largest collection of classical tapes in the world. The first set of ten discs appeared last year; the second set, also of ten discs, has just become available. These recordings run the gamut from Mozart to Glazunov, from Beethoven to Hindemith. They were made both live and in the studio, from the late 1940s to the early 1980s. And they document the mastery of a musician who might have been forgotten altogether.

The second set begins with Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, a crucial test for any conductor and an excellent introduction to Mravinsky's approach. The Fifth under his baton is brisk, no-nonsense, and tightly controlled. It is Toscanini-like in its fidelity to the score, but expansive enough to allow the music to breathe. Mravinsky gives us slashing, unadorned Beethoven, completely without pretension. Here, as always, he makes no attempt to dress the music up; he simply lets it speak.

It is like fresh air, this performance, as though the conductor has scraped the barnacles off the hull of an abused masterpiece, so that we can perceive it once again. Mravinsky refuses to "interpret"; he transmits the music as it emerged from the composer's pen.

Equally impressive is his account of the Beethoven Seventh, described by Wagner as "the apotheosis of the dance." And in Mravinsky's hands, it is. It is beautiful in pacing, unfailing in rhythm. It is small and Mozartean in spots, grand and Brucknerian in others—like Beethoven, in other words. The last movement is a whirling dervish, not always cleanly articulated, but this performance is as convincing as any recorded.

Two symphonies of Brahms are offered—the Third and the Fourth—and in them, Mravinsky is similarly faithful to the composer's intentions. Like all able conductors, he was a chameleon—a chameleon that clung to the bedrock principles undergirding all of music. The first movement of the Third is dark and impassioned, the woodwinds warm. Nothing is inappropriate; nothing is gratuitously spent. The second movement is well-timed, intelligent, relentless. Mravinsky knows the structure of the piece and holds back, mindful not to arrive too early. The third movement is plaintively sung, and the last a model of Romanticism tempered by Classicism, or Classicism unlocked by Romanticism—the synthesis of Brahms himself.

Of the Fourth, there are several immortal recordings—Wilhelm Furtwängler's, Bruno Walter's, Otto Klemperer's—and Mravinsky's must be placed among them. The playing is at times imprecise, but one forgives this, particularly in a live performance. Never does Mravinsky go for the showy gesture; never does he succumb to affectation. (He would have

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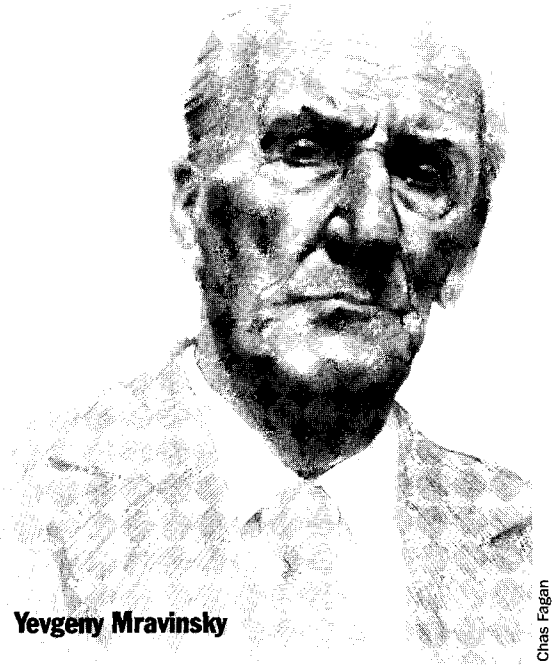
enjoyed knowing a kindred spirit, Maria Callas, who once upbraided a student for a histrionic note. "But Madame," said the student, "it is a cry of despair!" "It is not a cry of despair," said Callas; "it is a B-flat.") The slow movement is shockingly understated, almost like chamber music. It whispers, implores, and sighs. And a climax is a climax, because Mravinsky has not given away the store.

This sense of architecture is especially valuable in Bruckner, whose immensely long statements require above all conductorial management. Conducting a Bruckner symphony—and here we have the Eighth—is not dissimilar to conducting a Wagner opera: Every phrase must be conscious of all that has come before and of all that is to follow. Some conductors—good ones, even—do not have this gift, or, if they do, are incapable of conveying it to an orchestra. But nothing is beyond Mravinsky's range. He was, his innate musicianship aside, a cerebral man—a student of philosophy and literature—and such conductors lick their chops over Bruckner.

If the West knows anything about Mravinsky, it is that he was a lifelong associate of Shostakovich. They met as teenagers at the Leningrad Conservatory, and for the next five decades Mravinsky would champion the composer ardently, premiering most of his fifteen symphonies, the eighth of which is dedicated to him. Shostakovich oversaw rehearsals in Leningrad and huddled with the conductor over every detail. "He subjected me to a real interrogation," Shostakovich once said, "demanding an answer to any doubts that had arisen in him."

The pivotal night in both their lives occurred on November 21, 1937, at the premiere of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. The composer feared for his life: He had infuriated Stalin with his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtensk*, and, to forestall a violent reaction, he had asked Mravinsky not to perform his Fourth Symphony. Instead, he would try to rehabilitate himself with a new one, disguised as socialist realist by dutiful rhetoric on the title page.



Yevgeny Mravinsky

Chas Fagan

The ruse was successful, and the premiere was a signal event in 20th-century Russian musical life. One who attended recalls that, as the audience in Philharmonic Hall shouted and stomped, "Mravinsky held the score high above his head, so as to show that it was not he or the orchestra that deserved this storm of applause." Said Mravinsky, in old age, "I cannot understand how I dared to accept [Shostakovich's] proposal unhesitatingly, without giving it much thought. If it were put to me now, I would think it over for a long time, undergo many doubts, and finally perhaps refuse to undertake it."

Mravinsky would disappoint his friend severely in 1962 when he declined to perform his "Babi Yar" Symphony, which used poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a writer Khrushchev detested. Mravinsky claimed that he was uncomfortable with choral music, but this was plainly a lie, as, for one thing, he had premiered Shostakovich's own oratorio *The Song of the Forests*. So Shostakovich gave the symphony to the conductor Kirill Kondrashin in Moscow, who, to his credit, accepted it and withstood tremendous political pressure, applied right up until the lights dimmed. Observed the composer Isaak Schwartz, "Mravinsky, alas, was a man of his time," whose "rejection of the symphony horrified his friends and admirers." Said the cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich (who labeled Mravinsky an "unprincipled turncoat"), "Although Shostakovich later made his peace with Mravinsky, I believe that he despised him as a human being for his cowardice in the whole affair."

Nonetheless, Mravinsky was probably the world's foremost exponent of Shostakovich, as demonstrated by the BMG releases. The reading of the Fifth is instructive. The opening movement is slow, tense with fear. It is also unpleasant where it needs to be: brutal, angular, exposed—less lush than in many accounts. The Seventh Symphony (the "Leningrad") is saucily martial and unhurried, its second movement tipsy with circus-like foolery. And the Eighth—the one dedicated to Mravinsky—is clearly definitive. This is Shostakovich's most otherworldly symphony, and the conductor plumbs its depths, in a psychologically complicated, technically immaculate performance.

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It is natural to say that Mravinsky had special insight into this music, not only from knowing and conferring with the composer, but from the costly experience of being a citizen in Soviet Russia. An orchestra member reports that, in preparation of the finale of the Shostakovich Ninth, Mravinsky "objected to the character of the sound in the celli and double basses." "You have the wrong sound," he said. "I need the trampling of steel-shod boots"—and "we knew that he wasn't referring to the ordinary soldiers, but to the KGB forces."

For all this, however, Mravinsky had something infinitely better than his life experience, something that took him to the heart of all the music he conducted: He had musicality. It is musicality that enables Leontyne Price, of Laurel, Mississippi, to sing Brahms's *Zigeunerlieder* (gypsy songs) as though she had been born on the Austrian-Hungarian border, and musicality that enables Philippe Entremont, an icy Frenchman, to execute *Rhapsody in Blue* as though he had grown up in a Brooklyn apartment staring at a portrait of Gershwin. There is no substitute for musical understanding—not a personal relationship, not a knowledge of cultures or books—and Mravinsky had it, in spades.

So Yevgeny Mravinsky is now in from the cold. He was a rare musician who endeavored only to be the servant of music and not to stamp his own personality on it. In this way, he was the anti-Bernstein. He loved music with such ferocity that he could not bear to see it deformed by ego or hyperbole. He embodied all that is right about the "literal school," all that is necessary in the "expressive school."

His wife, a flautist, described him as "a man virtually condemned to music," who "looked upon conducting as a calling." She knew his purpose well: "Whenever he studied a score, he sought to enter into the atmosphere of a composition and to penetrate the composer's spiritual world, for he felt that his overriding task was to bring that world back to life." ♦

Fiction

A Remarkable Debut

By J. Bottum

The first great, humbling confession that must be made by everyone who thinks about books is that we have no idea where books spring from. We may pretend from time to time that we have a notion of the mechanisms of creation, but most literary criticism and biography are like a careful ornithological description of an eagle that never mentions that the bird can fly. Bad, derivative art may have explicable origins (it's bad art because it has explicable origins), but in the act of creating any real, substantial thing—from God's *Fiat Lux* all the way down to the invention of a good advertising slogan—the one great inexplicability is that the created thing comes to exist at all.

A small literary press in Minnesota has just brought out an extraordinarily literate first novel, *The Apprentice* (Graywolf, 248 pages, $22.95), by Lewis Libby, a 46-year-old lawyer and former official in the State and Defense departments under Presidents Reagan and Bush. There is no reason, of course, that a Washington lawyer shouldn't produce this kind of book, but then there is no reason that he should. And somehow, thanks to our conventional images of writers as brooding Byronic outsiders or New England spinsters, Libby's background makes it seem even more inexplicable than usual to have while reading his elegant and delicate little book that sudden recognition of a real creation—like the shock of reality when the eagle suddenly spreads its wings.

Set in northern Japan during the winter of 1903, as a smallpox epidemic spreads across the countryside and tensions with Russia build toward war, *The Apprentice* is an interesting mixture of historical novel, modern thriller, and old-fashioned existentialist description of the necessity for making choices in a world of incomplete knowledge. As the novel opens, a storm has closed the mountain passes leading out of the Japanese "Snow Country," and unwilling guests begin to gather in a small country guest house managed (in the owner's absence) by a young apprentice innkeeper named Setsuo. An elderly samurai nobleman, a group of hunters, an acting troupe, and an assortment of other chance travelers bed down on the inn's floor and wait for trails to be cut through the heavy winter drifts. As each new guest stumbles in, the rumors of war and the fear of smallpox grow, and the apprentice finds himself drawn into a mysterious sequence of events in which an enormous but unspecified weight seems to rest on the choices he decides to make.

The promotional material for the novel declares that Libby's years as a speechwriter and policy analyst in Washington serve as a major influence upon his work. The thought is a frightening one, for *The Apprentice* primarily tells the story of a little, unimportant man caught on the edges of a con-

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spiracy no one will explain to him. It may be a simple plot of murder and robbery, or it may involve international espionage and the highest levels of government. But the apprentice is on the outside of whatever is going on, a peasant closed off from the knowledge he needs and certain only that he has become entangled in affairs beyond his reach.

Everything in the novel is directed toward this brooding sense of ignorance. Key remarks are interrupted, whispers trail off half-heard, references are left to dangle, and even at the book's close the central mystery has been left unexplained.

Libby first composed his story as a novella in 1971, and he reports that in one of his intermediate drafts he moved the story's setting from rural Japan at the beginning of the 20th century to contemporary America. But the decision to return, in this final version, to an almost medieval Japanese setting was exactly the right one. Like Lafcadio Hearn's late-Victorian sketches of unfamiliar Japan, the sheer alien quality of the country and the characters' motivations helps create for the reader a feeling for the young apprentice's bewilderment and sense of a world that admits no explanation.

When a late guest arrives at the inn, takes one look around at the other guests, and suddenly plunges back into the storm, the apprentice and one of the snowbound hunters race out to bring him back before he freezes. But when the apprentice finds the hunter murdered in the snow with a large sum of money in his pocket, he begins to realize that the storm has brought together in his inn several groups opposing one another in some unknown conspiracy. No one in the inn is sure of the role played by anyone else. Drawn by the beauty of the acting troupe's leading girl, the apprentice takes at first what seems to be the actors' side—until his suspicions are raised against the girl and he freezes into the strange immobility of ignorance that gradually paralyzes almost everyone. Only the old samurai seems at last capable of acting, and in his actions lies the young apprentice's only hope, if not to understand, then at least to survive the dangers gathered to wait out the snow.

There may be many things that writing schools can teach, but one thing they cannot teach is how to put an entire book together—for that is the kind of thing one learns only by doing. This is why, though the particular effect varies widely, all first novels share a kind of flawed construction that marks them as books written by new authors, learning as they go. Though it is a fine and even elegant work, *The Apprentice* remains nonetheless a first novel, weakened by two first-novel sorts of flaws: a slight over-insistence by the author that his story conform to the form of a thriller, and a slight over-working that comes from holding on to a manuscript too long. The action in the story is just a little forced, as though Libby had spent too long in admiration of the ability of Brian Moore or Georges Simenon to move a delicate psychological study along by sudden bursts of violent activity. And the prose is sometimes just a little over-bright, as though Libby had gone through the manuscript—which he held, in one form or another, for nearly twenty-five years—and polished it like silver one too many times.

But *The Apprentice* also has that inexplicable quality of being a suddenly real creation—a new thing brought into the world. Even in this first novel, Lewis Libby somehow seems to know already what all creators have to know: how to let a story spread its unlikely wings and fly. Matched with his apparently natural elegance and literary touch, he is a writer who can soar. ♦

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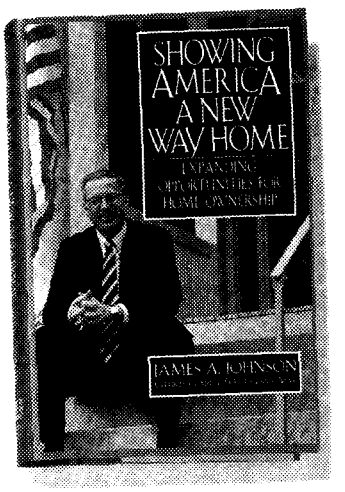

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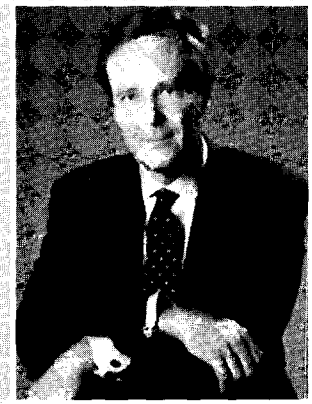
■ CROSSTALK

The Sayings of Archbishop James

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one journalist to rescue, by force of sheer moral surety, the nation's capital from the ethical morass of its own making, it is usually I, James Fallows, who is called in to do the job. So it is with a sense of austere yet bland high-mindedness that this week I assume the office of Archbishop of *U.S. News & World Report*, ready to lead a talented, yet shrinking, staff to a new modality, which I like to call "The Journalism of Conscience."

Thus it is with this issue that we change our focus from "News You Can Use" to "Human Imperfections and How to Eliminate Them." Yet we in the high calling of journalism can strive to advance social uplift only if we at the same time talk obsessively about getting our own house in order. As it sayeth on my screen-saver program: "Cast Not The First Stone If Your Own Navel Hath Gone Ungazed." And already I have excommunicated from this magazine those journalists who have profited from the lecture circuit, and I will continue to cleanse the staff of those caught up in worldly temptations—except in the case of mega-buckraker David Gergen, whom Mort Zuckerman really likes. And slowly will I also seek to purge the magazine of advertisements. For if journalists are wrong to take money from speaking to industry groups, surely magazines are wrong to accept advertising from same. For how can we practice "The Journalism of Conscience" if our pages are a sewer of advertisements from tobacco killers like Merit Cigarettes (pp. 5-6), alcohol poisoners like Absolut Vodka (back cover) and military fatcats like Lockheed Martin (pp. 26-27)?

My first cover story—



James Fallows. *"I hope you will share your cookies."*

"Popgun Politics: Both candidates are laying claim to the crime issue, and neither is playing it straight"—reveals the astonishing fact that our political parties put a partisan spin on their presentation of issues like crime. And we brilliantly succeed in that story in doing what we shall always strive to do—cut through the half-perspectives of left and right and replace them with our own half-perspectives, as derived from the conventional wisdom of the current moment. It is for that high purpose that I come to work every morning—that and trying to see how many Charlie Peters protégés I can squeeze into a single magazine.

As more of my issues come out (in the future they shall be known as encyclicals), we shall also strive to lay bear the vices that plague this nation. For example, a future series will explore the wave of disloyalty that now sweeps the nation's capital. Dick Morris serves the president of the United States, yet feels free to cast aspersions behind his back. White House officials leave the administration and write scathing exposés of their former bosses. My sources tell me that this disgusting pattern of disloyalty started with a certain former speechwriter for Jimmy Carter who quit and wrote a tell-all in the *Atlantic*. As soon as my reporters find out who that blackguard is, rest assured we shall rip him a new one.

Through all this, I shall depend on readers to contribute their own perspectives. For journalism is a public profession, and there is no difference between those of us who are called into journalism and those of you who read it, except that we are much more righteous than you would ever dare to be.

—*James Fallows*

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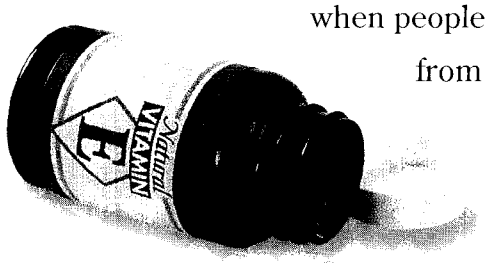
New study shows vitamin E helps seniors live longer

A new study conducted by the National Institute on Aging concluded that when people age 67-105 took vitamin E supplements, their risk of death from all causes was reduced by 27%. The study, published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, also stated that vitamin E supplements reduced the risk of death from coronary heart disease by 41% and from cancer by 22%.



By 1997, ADM will supply 300 million people with the current recommended daily allowance of vitamin E.

- DEATH FROM ALL CAUSES WAS REDUCED BY 27%
- DEATH FROM CORONARY HEART DISEASE WAS REDUCED BY 41%
- DEATH FROM CANCER WAS REDUCED BY 22%

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STATES RIGHTS—WHO CARES?

What a great idea! It's just what every American has longed for: Another federal agency soaking up taxpayer dollars to perform a function better managed at the state level!

Yet that is what's happening in Washington. Financial services reform is in jeopardy in Congress because of a fight over the states' rights to regulate insurance. Currently, 10,000 state officials regulate insurance. Insurance regulation is—and has been for over 200 years—the responsibility of states.

A power grab by a federal bureaucracy—the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC)—is threatening to stamp out state authority to regulate insurance and to issue a license to all people who sell insurance, including those employed by national banks.

Unless this states' right is protected, the day will soon come when Congress will be forced to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to oversee the $488 billion insurance industry—the largest industry exclusively regulated by the states.

It doesn't make sense in this era of returning power to the states to allow the Comptroller—an unelected regulator—to cancel state insurance regulation and force Congress to create the Federal Department of Insurance Regulation to fill the void. The American people don't want or need another federal bureaucracy!

Congress can preserve this states' right by supporting a provision in a pending House financial services reform bill (H.R. 1858) that reaffirms and keeps insurance oversight power in the states' hands.

WHO CARES ABOUT STATES RIGHTS? WE DO AND SO DO CONSUMERS!

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